BRITANNIA:

A

POEM.

BY

SAMUEL HULL WILCOCKE.

Iſland of bliſs! amid the ſubject ſeas,
That thunder round thy rocky coaſts, ſet up,
At once the wonder, terror, and delight
Of diſtant nations, whoſe remoteſt ſhores
Can ſoon be ſhaken by thy naval arm;
Not to be ſhook thyſelf, but all aſſaults
Baffling, as thy hoar cliffs the loud ſea wave.

THOMSON.

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PREFACE.

THE Author of the following Poem, revolving in his mind the origin of poetry, aſcribed by Voſſius to the paſſion of love, and by Madame Dacier to the fervour of devotion, has, with Du Bos, been led to believe that it was primitively employed to preſerve the memory of paſt events; being produced by the enthuſiaſm which accompanied the recital of the achievements of dexterity or valour in the adventurous purſuit of the chace, or the more dangerous attack of thoſe iſolated ſavages, who, refuſing to mix with, or expelled for their vices from ſociety, became the lurking robbers of the foreſt, and were the ſcourge of each community in the earlier ſtages of civilization. On the return from theſe excurſions, the natural theme of every tongue was the warm remembrance of the actions of the day. The glow of animated pride, with which each hunter or warrior related the exploits of his hardy companions, paſſed into the ſouls of his hearers; and when repeated to a ſucceeding liſtening generation by the veteran heroes, who,

in their youthful prime, had earned, with honourable danger, the ſhaggy ſpoils of the lion, or the knotty club of the murderous outlaw, aſſumed, with that force of metaphorical diction, which invariably characterizes the eloquence of the ruder ages of ſociety, the flow of metrical compoſition. Hence the melody of poetry became known and felt by every inhabitant of the hamlet, and each paſſion of the heart, that was ſuſceptible of warmth and energy, kindled into rapture at this new and expreſſive mode of utterance. Religion burſt, with lofty ſtrains and lengthened pauſes, into hymns of adoration. Love, in ſofter, gentler numbers, ſweetly whiſpered the accents of delight. Even boiſterous merriment felt the enchanting influence, and ſpread, in coarſer, but enlivening flaſhes, its jocund couplets round. But heroic poetry, with the dignified meaſure of exalted verſification, which ſpecially celebrated the tranſcendant worth of proweſs and conduct, maintained its pre-eminence of primogeniture, and has conſtantly preſerved its due ſuperiority over the various other ſpecies of harmonious effuſion. It thus originally conſiſted in unconnected relations of the great actions of ſome village hero or mighty hunter. This is, in fact, that kind of poetry denominated by proſodians the *epicinoid*, which is defined, as being the celebration of ſome victory or ſucceſsful adventure, and which it was cuſtomary to chaunt on the ſafe return of the hero. If conjecture on this head may be admitted, we may reaſonably ſuppoſe that it was from ſuch ſongs of victory and welcome that Homer collected the greateſt part of his information reſpecting the heroes of Greece,

Greece, who aſſiſted at the ſiege of Troy; and that, from the combination of theſe detached poems, his comprehenſive and creative genius, aided by the elegant mythology which the Grecians had borrowed from Egypt, invented that perfect ſpecies of poetry which has ſince been denominated the epic. From the beauty of the imagery, which what is called the machinery of the Iliad affords, critics and poetic commentators have reſolved, that fiction or fable is poſitively the very eſſence of poetry, and that, without the embelliſhments of fancy no epic poem can exiſt. From the ſublime ſimplicity and importance of the action and the hero, they have made it a ſtanding order, that an epic poem muſt, to eſtabliſh its title to their *imprimatur*, be built on one ſingle action of one ſingle man; and from various other attributes and peculiarities, which they have found in Homer, they have enacted a number of regulations and reſtrictions, which an epic poet muſt be bound to obſerve, or wave all claim to that diſtinguiſhing title. Ariſtotle was the firſt who ſtated all theſe requiſites, and thus, as it were, arranged the rule and compaſſes by which all future productions of the kind were to be meaſured; but the etymology of the term epic certainly cannot bear the conſtruction which has been put upon it; it is derived from the Greek word Επος, *verbum*, *carmen*, a diſcourſe, a poem, and is therefore not more ſtrictly applicable, at leaſt in ſuch a confined ſenſe, to one ſort of poem than another. That fiction has always been one of the moſt abundant ſources of the beauty and amuſement of poetry cannot be denied, but that it is inherently neceſſary for a good poem to be fraught

with fable, and formed by invention, is, perhaps, not ſo eaſily reconcileable to good ſenſe; yet this has been the univerſally adopted opinion on this ſubject. Reſpecting the other peculiarities which are deemed requiſite, M. de Voltaire's ſentiments on this head are extremely in point. "Almoſt all the critics," he ſays, in his Eſſay on Epic Poetry, "have ſought in Homer for rules, which moſt "certainly he did not intend to eſtabliſh; but ſince the "Grecian poet has left us two poems of a nature wholly "different, they have been puzzled to reconcile Homer "with himſelf. Meeting afterwards with Virgil, who, in "a manner, united in his work the plans both of the Iliad "and of the Odyſſey, they were forced to adopt new ex- "pedients, in order to adjuſt their rules alſo to the Æneid. "They acted almoſt with the ſame tergiverſation as the "aſtronomers, who invented every day new imaginary "circles, and diſmiſſed from, or added to their theories, "half a dozen of cryſtalline heavens upon the leaſt diffi- "culty."

THESE few obſervations have been made with the view of defending the attempt to deviate from the ſuppoſed principles of heroic verſe, which will be found in the Poem now offered to the public, but by no means with any wiſh to ſue for leave to attribute to it the honours of the *epopœia*: independent of its being wholly devoid of the eſſential characters which are deemed requiſite to conſtitute it ſuch, except that of being a relation in metre of great and intereſting events, the preſent Poem has alſo this difficulty to encounter,

encounter, that it is a ſhort and imperfect ſketch—a foundation of a building, which, in all probability, will never be erected: it was primarily intended as the firſt book of a ſeries of heroi-biographic poetry, relative to the hiſtory of England, by which the Author propoſed to reſtore that kind of compoſition to what, as he conceived, was its original, grand, and beneficial province, the narration, in exalted language, of the deeds that have immortalized the memory of our country's heroes, without recurring to the help of fable, or obſerving any of the unities recommended in poems partaking of the epic.

In the firſt juvenile ardour with which he embraced the idea, which he has ſince, in part, put into effect, the Author fondly conceived that ſuch a plan might, perhaps, lay the ground-work of a continued and unceaſing national poetic hiſtory; and that, where the life or abilities of one poet failed, another might ſucceed, and ſo each generation celebrate the virtues and honours of the preceding, till time ſhall be no more. Although, in ancient times, poetry and prophecy were ſiſter-miſtreſſes of the ſame ardent fancy, yet no ſuch latitude, either in love or letters, is allowed a modern. Renouncing, therefore, ſuch extenſive ideas, it may not, however, be deemed irrelevant to hope, that this attempt may be productive of ſome benefit; that, if not found ſufficient to animate the minds and hearts of Britons with the unconquerable love of their country, which it is intended to inſpire, it may ſtill furniſh the hint to ſome abler ſuitor of Calliope to plan and execute a more ſuc-

ceſsful undertaking. Provided a Britiſh Tyrtæus can be found to awaken the virtues of patriotiſm and the love of glory in the warriors and ſtateſmen of a riſing generation, what does it import who that Tyrtæus is? It is not ſo much for individual as for national fame that we ought to ſtrive; for the former is but the glorious reward of our exertions for the advancement of the latter. The plan here entered upon is not merely of ſpeculative benefit. What were the ſongs of the ancient Scandinavians? what the martial poetry of the Huns? what the inſpiring minſtrelſy of the Caledonian and Cambrian bards? Recitals of great and glorious deeds; incitements to virtue, to honour, to intrepidity, and to victory. This manner of celebrating the hiſtory of their country univerſally prevailed amongſt all the hardy and free-born nations of the north; it was the latent but all-powerful ſpring that excited and produced the vaſt exertions of theſe *barbarians* (as Rome, in her boundleſs vanity of ambition, indiſcriminately ſtyled all who refuſed implicitly to ſubmit to her yoke) which in the end ſurmounted every obſtacle, and ſucceſſively ſubverted the greateſt empires and monarchies of the earth.

THE ſame method of poetic compoſition that is here attempted has already been adopted by a very able genius of the preſent day, Mr. Jephſon, in his poem, entitled, Roman Portraits. Pleaſed with having found ſuch reſpectable authority to countenance the form of his work, the Author was particularly happy, on peruſing the Preface to that poem, to find that his own ideas on the ſubject, and the

the plan he had ſo long had on the anvil, had likewiſe occurred to Mr. Jephſon: "It would ſtill be a higher gratification to me," ſays that gentleman, "if I could flatter myſelf that the form of the preſent work might ſuggeſt an idea to ſome other of producing to the world the prominent events and diſtinguiſhed characters of England, with ſuperior ſplendour. How abundant are the materials! How important the revolutions! How diverſified the characters! How many ſovereigns eminent for great virtues, vices, and achievements! What changes in religion and government! What wars and factions! Many of her ſtateſmen and poets may vie with the outſpread names which adorn the annals, and conſecrate the muſes, of Greece and Italy. In my childhood I remember well the firſt impreſſions which I received, with any permanency, of parts of the Engliſh hiſtory, were from the hiſtorical plays of Shakeſpeare. There is no young mind ſo unmuſical as not to be ſenſible to the harmony of numbers; and there is little doubt but that ſuch a ſummary as is here recommended, if executed with brilliancy, would not only be the beſt vehicle to communicate early knowledge, but to rouſe young faculties to the further purſuit of ſuch ſubjects:

"*Os tenerum pueri balbumque poeta figurat.*

"As to myſelf, the ſhades of night are cloſing too faſt around me, to allow of my attempting a theme ſo arduous; but I may hope to retain, for a conſiderable time, faculties ſufficient to make me ſenſible of, and pleaſed

"with

"with the ſucceſsful labours of my contemporaries."—This, therefore, was a new ſpur to the undertaking, and could not fail to induce the author to attempt ſupplying, in part, the deſideratum which Mr. Jephſon here alludes to, with the poem he had engaged in. He likewiſe altered the typographical arrangement of it, ſo as to be in ſome meaſure conformable to that of the Roman Portraits, which he conceived was a moſt happy mode for this ſpecies of poetry.

He had not, at firſt, any intention of publiſhing this imperfect commencement of a larger work, had not ſome of his literary friends, to whom he communicated the Poem, and who were pleaſed to think favourably of it, adviſed him to lay this proviſional ſpecimen before an enlightened public, whoſe determination in approving or rejecting it might fix his reſolves with reſpect to the further purſuit of the favours of the Muſe in this arduous walk.

It may be proper to ſtate here, that, in order to aſcertain whether, in any degree, his poetry was worthy of attention, the Author firſt tranſmitted two extracts of this Poem, under the ſignature of W. to a very popular periodical publication *, perſuaded that, if the diſcriminating conductors of that work ſhould admit his lines into their poetic miſcellany, their demerits would not be ſo great as to preclude the idea, which his friends had before ſuggeſted, of publication.

* See the Monthly Mirror for September 1796, and February 1797.

A POEM,

A POEM, profeſſedly following the plan of the Runic and Celtic bards, profeſſedly diſcarding the uſe of fiction, unleſs the perſonification of Britannia, that of the Genius of the Main, and a few other inſtances of *proſopopœia* be eſteemed ſuch, and profeſſedly relating hiſtoric facts, ought to be eſpecially conformable to hiſtoric truth. The proem to the *Henriade* of Voltaire is perfectly applicable to ſuch a performance.

Je t' invoque aujourd' hui, ſevere verité,
Repands ſur mes ecrits ta force et ta clarté.
Viens, parle, et s'il eſt vrai que la fable autrefois
Sut a tes fiers accens mêler ſa douce voix,
Si ſa main delicate orna ta tête altiere,
Si ſon ombre embellit les traits de ta lumiere;
Avec moi ſur tes pas permets lui de marcher,
Pour orner tes attraits et non pour les cacher.

And why may not the ſober, virtuous, charms of hiſtoric truth be arrayed in thoſe flowing robes of attractive elegance, which have hitherto been held excluſively to belong to the harlot beauty of poetic falſehood? Why may not the *utile* and the *dulce* be combined in every literary walk? It may, however, be remarked, that in ſome parts of this Poem circumſtances are related differently from, or contrary to the common opinion; but this has only been done where there are two opinions; and where hiſtory is doubtful, where there are two ways open to the annaliſt, who will blame the Poet for following that moſt conducive to his general aim? The Author is very far, however, from ſetting

ting up for a critic in ſuch reſearches, he has only exerciſed his individual right of adopting one out of two or more different opinions which have been preſented to him by hiſtorians and antiquarians, to which, however, he would beg leave to ſuperadd a claim of more extenſive indulgence in ſuch a right, on the ſcore of poetic convenience.

He may, perhaps, be likewiſe ſaid to treſpaſs on the department of the hiſtorian, and that his Poem is, in fact, no other than a hiſtory in blank verſe; but the province of hiſtory is not only to record the virtues and illuſtrious achievements of individuals, but likewiſe their vices, their diſhonour, their prejudices, and to reflect on the cauſes and conſequences of events, while the aim of this Poem is chiefly the preſentment of grand and glorious examples, excitive of emulation, and worthy to be imitated. In order, however, that the chain of hiſtory might be traced unbroken in this ſeries of depicted characters, he has endeavoured to give a conciſe and clear account, in his notes, of ſuch events and circumſtances as are requiſite to impreſs the whole of the Britiſh hiſtory upon the reader.

The Author here deprecates the ſeverity of criticiſm towards his preſent performance, in the firſt inſtance, with reſpect to the execution, in conſideration of its being an early trial of ſkill in the Heliconian art; and, ſecondly, with reſpect to the novelty of the plan, and his deviation from common rules, in conſideration that it is more arduous, as well as, if ſucceſsful, more glorious, to climb the

hill of poetic fame by a nearly unfrequented and rugged path, but which may, perhaps, be found to afford a firm and ſteady footing, than to follow the more commodious but more ſlippery tracks which the numberleſs pilgrims, in all ages, towards the exalted fane on the mountain-top, have worn bare and broad, in continual progreſſion.

BRITANNIA.

ARGUMENT.

EXORDIUM—Dedication to Britain—Addreſs to Britons—Invocation of the Britiſh Muſe—Plan of treating the ſubject—Wiſh for Britain's Proſperity.

THE FIRST AGE—CASSIBELAN—He reſiſts Cæſar—The Ocean the natural defence of Britain—Inſtanced by the diſcomfiture of the Spaniſh Armada, and the late attempt upon Ireland—Manners of the ancient Britons—Caſſibelan forced at laſt to pay tribute—CARACTACUS—His war againſt the Romans—His laſt battle and captivity—His ſpeech before Auguſtus—BOADICEA—Her revenge—Suetonius prepares to attack her—Deſcription of her chariot—Her harangue to her army—Shock of the battle—Her defeat and death—VENUSIUS—His implacable enmity to Rome—His injuries—GALGACUS—His reſiſtance of Agricola—His ſpeech to the Caledonians—The victory gained over him partially repreſented by the Romans—ERECTION OF THE ROMAN WALLS IN BRITAIN—FINGAL AND HIS HEROES—OSSIAN—Eulogium of that Poet—The exploits of Fingal in Scandinavia—againſt the Romans—at the Orcades—in Ireland—Extent of his fame—COMPARISON BETWEEN THE ROMANS AND CALEDONIANS—FIRST REMOTE CAUSE OF THE NAVAL EMINENCE OF BRITAIN—EXPEDITION OF THE FRANKS FROM THE EUXINE TO THE GERMAN OCEAN—Devaſtation of Africa and Sicily—They arrive in ſafety on the Friſian ſhores—CARAUSIUS—The Britiſh emperor—He eſtabliſhes a naval power, having invited the Franks into his ſervice—Acknowledged joint-emperor by Diocleſian and Maximian—Concluſion.

BRITANNIA.

EXORDIUM.

BRITAIN! to thee I dedicate my ſong;
'Tis of thy ſons I ſing; a noble race
Of heroes, who have fought and bled for thee
Their country, and her ſacred liberty,
Of ſapient legiſlators, god-like men,
Who gave thee freedom or maintained thee free.
Britannia, hail! thou ſea-girt queen of fate;
Liſt to the records of thy riſing power;
Liſt to the virtues, that have fixed thee thus
Immoveable; a rock to awe the world,
And curb deſpotic rage, and ſtop the ſpeed
Of raſh licentiouſneſs and mad diſrule;
Liſt to th' eventful deeds of theſe thy ſons,

Who wielded, vengeful, their unerring ſteel
Through thick-embattled hoſts, or ſent, at ſea,
Midſt thunder and midſt carnage, to thy foes
Deſtruction's winged meſſengers, to pierce
The ſtouteſt navies and the ſtouteſt hearts;
Who braved the furies of the northern blaſt,
The burning tropics, and congealing poles,
'Gainſt Nature's obſtacles made good their way,
Solely for thee. Behold th' immortal ſcroll,
Of hardihood and worth, equal—beyond
The Grecian and the Roman; oh! may this
Electric fire o'er preſent times diffuſe,
And, ever active, future ages rouſe,
That thy bold empire o'er the watery waſte
May ſtand unmoved as long as venturous man
Dares lord it o'er the waves, or ocean heaves;
And may my ſong urge on our dauntleſs youth,
In emulation of their fathers fame,
To deeds as bright; oh! were my verſe Tyrtæan,
What mortals e'er have dared ſhould be outdone.
What have not mortals dared? And yet, I ween,
Achievement is a vaſty field, untrod

In many a corner, nay, in many a round:
What former untaught ages would have ſcanned
Impoſſible, have we not ſeen performed
By ſturdy reſolution, and by toil,
By hardy grinding perſeverance, and by care?
What ſcoffs, what villain taunts, were not the lot
Of bold Columbus, * ere he raiſed a world
Himſelf, out of the untracked weſtern main,
Full to the ſight of Europe's timorous ſons,
Who viewed aſtoniſhed, and who ſcarce conceived
But that the fairy viſion, was a child
Of fancy, mimicked into life?—And he,
Intrepid Magellan, whoſe venturous prow

* Every particular relative to ſo famous a man as Columbus, both antecedent and ſubſequent to his diſcovery of the new world, is ſo well known, that it would be needleſs to inſiſt upon the many mortifying rebuffs he met with, wherever he propoſed the wild and extravagant ſcheme, as it was then eſteemed, of ſailing to the Antipodes. But he poſſeſſed, in common with all who form and execute extenſive enterprizes, that perſeverance and enthuſiaſm which hardens the ſoul againſt the prejudiced deciſions of ignorance, the provoking diſdain of pride, the narrow caution of avarice, and the ſhameful delays of indolence.

 Ploughed

Ploughed the firſt furrow round the circled world
From ſun to ſun, and tracked a lonely way
For many a daring keel, exploding full
The jarring claims of either India's lord *
To boundleſs eaſt or boundleſs weſtward reign?
See where ſublime, in fields of ether bright,
In ſtar-refulgent majeſty enthroned,
Down from th' empyrean look th' illuſtrious ſhades
Of our famed anceſtors to view theſe times,
To view their martial ſons, elate with worth
Borrowed from them, toil for a laurel crown.
Be noble then, my brethren! ſtand ye firm,
And when deſpair comes hovering o'er your bands,
Rather than grieve their honour-loving hearts,
By baſe ſubmiſſion, ignominious flight,

* The kings of Spain and Portugal, who claimed by the bull of Pope Alexander the VIth, the former, the unbounded dominion of all countries diſcovered towards the weſt, and the latter, towards the eaſt. This grant was made without conſidering the ſpheric form of the earth, and it was of courſe invalidated by the ſucceſs of the expedition of Ferdinand Magellan, whoſe ſhip was the firſt that circumnavigated the globe, though that commander was himſelf killed in one of the Ladrone iſlands.

Or coward death behind ignobly dealt,
Whirl back the demon to the lowering hoſt
That looſed the harpy, and as eager hounds
Regardleſs of the tuſky monſter's gore,
Aſſailing, drag the briſtled boar to earth,
Thus unappalled ruſh on to victory,
And tear the laurel piece-meal from herſelf,
If ſhe wo'n't give it you; a firm reſolve
To conquer, is half way to win her ſmiles.
Come, Muſe of Albion! who in Thomſon's verſe
Breathed Liberty's extatic ardent ſtrain,
Who gave to Addiſon, a Cato's ſoul,
To Milton, his ſublime exalted ſtrength,
And to th' inimitable Shakeſpeare's verſe,
The genuine ſtamp of nature, aweful, true,
And forceful as th' impetuous guſt of heaven;
Give me to ſhare their energy divine;
Give me to paint, in ardent numbers bold,
The arms and arts that graced this matchleſs iſle;
'Tis not alone to martial deeds that here
Th' hiſtoric Muſe confines her liberal praiſe,
Sometimes ſhe leaves th' enſanguined field of war

For milder themes, and, reminiſcent oft
Of poets, artiſts, and of general worth,
Holds bright examples to the willing mind,
As various as each ſeveral ſtate can aſk,
That each may in the arduous taſk aſſiſt,
And hand in hand, raiſe high our Britiſh fame;
And as the Roca Ora * braves the ſtorm
Of ages in the north' antipodes,

* The Roca de Ora, a ſtupendous rock in the midſt of the Northern Pacific Ocean, firſt diſcovered, and thus named, by the Spaniards. It is deſcribed, and a plate given of it, in Meares's voyage to the N. W. coaſt of America, the ſailors of whoſe ſhip called this ſingular maſs of ſtone, riſing from the bottom of a tempeſtuous ocean, unconnected and far diſtant from any land, by the not unapt name of Lot's wife. "The waves," ſays this intelligent ſeaman, "broke againſt its rugged front with a fury proportioned to the immenſe diſtance they had to roll before they were interrupted by it. It roſe almoſt perpendicular to the height of near three hundred and fifty feet. There was a cavern on its ſouth eaſtern ſide, into which the waters ruſhed, with an aweful and tremendous noiſe. In regarding this ſtupendous rock, which ſtood alone in an immenſe ocean, we could not but conſider it as an object which had been able to reſiſt one of thoſe great convulſions of nature, that change the very form of thoſe parts of the globe which they are permitted to deſolate."

Receiving

Receiving ever on it's dreary ſides
The billows of the Magellanic main, †
Full many a thouſand league impetuous rolled
From ſouth to north, by envious Neptune ſwelled
And the nigh-burſting cheeks of Æolus,
To daſh its pride, yet centered in itſelf
It dares their efforts vain; ſo may thy rock,
Britannia! ſtand unſhaken, unimpaired,
Fixed on the firmeſt baſe, deep-chained to fate,
And laugh to ſcorn a world's unmeaning rage,

† Or Pacific Ocean, ſo called from the moderate weather which the firſt mariners who ſailed in it experienced between the tropics; but being, in fact, not leſs, and, perhaps, from its vaſt extent, more ſubject to ſtorms, than either the Atlantic or Indian ſeas, it might, with a better grace, bear the name of its firſt traverſer. This would be paying a juſt tribute to the memory of that celebrated navigator, in the ſame manner as of late, homage has been done to that of Columbus, the firſt diſcoverer of America, by giving to that continent the name of Columbia, which is daily gaining ground in the Anglo-American republic of the new world. The denomination of Magellanic indeed is authorized by its being uſed by ſeveral French geographers, and our correct philologiſt, Dr. Johnſon, likewiſe gives it to the regions commonly called Patagonia, probably from their being adjacent to the Straits of Magellan.

Nor fall but with old time; and when this globe,
At the dread clangour of the heavenly trump,
Swept by an igneous comet from its orb,
In huge combuſtion, crumbles into chaos,
May Britain's time-outliving fame remain
Recorded in angelic memory,
The nobleſt ſtate that ever ſtood on earth.

THE FIRST AGE.

CASSIBELAN*.

The firſt enrolled amongſt our valiant chiefs,
Cassibelan, held Cæſar at the point,
When Rome was Cæſar's, and imperial Rome
Waved her proud eagles from the Gallic ſhore

To

* Caſſibelan, or Caſſivelaunus, as modified to their own language by the Romans, was prince or general of the Trinobantes, one of the nations of Britain, inhabiting the preſent counties of Middleſex, Eſſex, and Hertfordſhire, and was unanimouſly choſen to conduct the war againſt thoſe ambitious foreigners who attempted

To diſtant Syria's bounds. The hero ſtood,
Clad in his own majeſtic ſavageneſs,
'Gainſt Roman legions.—Julius' triple vaunt
Suits not our Britons, for they ſent him home
Twice unſucceſsful from their chalky cliffs;
While o'er the foaming ſurges round their iſle
Lay ſhattered and diſmayed his fragile fleet.
So when Eliza reigned, Hiſpania ſent *
Her fleets againſt this tempeſt-guarded land;

tempted the conqueſt of the iſland. Long and manfully he ſtrove in the unequal conteſt, but the ſuperior genius of his adverſary overcame at length, and after many ſucceſſive defeats, and the loſs of his capital city (ſuppoſed to have been Verulam, in Hertfordſhire) he conſented to pay tribute to Rome and to leave Mandubratius, the ally of Cæſar, in poſſeſſion of his territories. This Mandubratius, or, as he is called by Eutropius and Bede, Androgeus, is branded by hiſtory as a traitor and a villain. It was he who invited Julius Cæſar over to the iſland, and for the ſake of diſpoſſeſſing Caſſibelan of the ſovereignty of the Trinobantes, baſely delivered his country to the rapacious beak and all-graſping talons of the Roman eagle.

* The Spaniſh armada, in the reign of queen Elizabeth, on the diſcomfiture of which a medal was ſtruck, inſcribed with the utmoſt propriety and moſt pious humility—*Afflavit deus et diſſipantur.*

But

But Heaven's tremendous blaſt diſperſed their force
Like chaff before the eddying whirlwind's wings.
So too of late Hibernia's coaſts beheld *
Perfidious Gaul advancing o'er the waves;
High flushed with inſolence, elate with pride,
The Gaſcon bullies weened a traitorous band
Would meet them knee-deep on the ſandy beach
With cordial welcome, glut th' inſatiate maw
Of plunder with the prey of property,
And trample with them on the wreck of all
That holds ſweet ſocial concord unimpaired.
Had their bold footſteps blurred the fatal ſhore,
How would their hopes have met a direful check;
Unſhaken, faithful, loyal, Ireland's ſons
Ne'er to the fawning hypocrites would yield,
Nor change a real for ideal good;
But Ocean ſmiled to ſee the unfledged brood,
Gariſh and gawdy in their Gallic trim,

* Alluding to the late attempt made by the French to invade Ireland, in which, according to the moſt accurate accounts, out of thirty-eight ſhips of war of various ſizes, eleven were loſt, deſtroyed, or taken, excluſive of tranſports, of which laſt no detail has tranſpired.

Brave

Brave with preſumptuous ſails the lurking ſtorms
And ſcowling horrors of December's ſky,
And ſoon, indignant at the vain attempt
To graſp at conqueſt where himſelf defends,
Like a huge whale, prone on Norwegian ſeas
His mile-long length extending o'er the deep,
When on his back, miſtaken for an iſle,
Some pygmy Lapland fiſhermen deſcend
Unknowing of the danger, while they tread
With careleſs ſteps along the ſlimy ſward,
The bulky monſter, moving ponderous,
Heaves his broad carcaſe, the diſparting flood
Ingulphs remorſeleſs all the infant crew;
So the terrific genius of the main
Half reared his billowy front; deep in the waves
The glittering gewgaws ſunk beneath his frown.
But Julius' mind, by ſtern ambition fired,
Was nerved the more, the more untoward fate
Seemed to forbid his farther ſtride to power.
What but ambition, never-ſated fiend,
Urged on this Cæſar to return again
To unknown regions, and to hoſtile ſhores,

To

To forge his fetters for our Albion's ſons?
See where in native liberty they roam
From bank to bank, from verdant bower to bower,
And chaſe the deer, or ſcale the lofty oak
For ſacred miſletoe, all reckleſs they
Of who were maſters or who ſlaves, beyond
The rolling barriers of their own domain.
What though their Druids' ſuperſtitious power
Fettered their active minds, that power ne'er cauſed
Sicilian or Pariſian maſſacres;
What though Andate's * ſanguinary rites

Were

* Andate or Andraſte, the goddeſs of victory, worſhipped by the Britons, to whom human ſacrifies were offered of captives taken in war. The ſeeming barbarity of theſe ſuperſtitious rites is greatly done away, by the conſideration that the Druids aſſiduouſly inculcated the doctrine of the metempſychoſis, or tranſmigration of ſouls, not as taught by Pythagoras, or as believed at preſent among the Bramins of India, that the bodies of beaſts were the receptacles of human ſouls after diſſolution, but maintaining the immediate animation of other human beings by the ſpirits that were liberated by death. Hence Lucan, ſpeaking of the Druids of Britain, ſays,

——*regit idem ſpiritus artus,*
Orbe alio longæ, canitis ſi cognita, vitæ
Mors media eſt.——

——*inde*

Were held midſt blood of foes, they never urged
The dagger lifted at a brother's throat;
What though refinement barbarouſly calls
The friendly intercourſe of ſocial clans,
Who held all nature's boons, e'en beauty's ſelf, *
Promiſcuous, and bleſſing each alike,

——— *inde ruendi*
In ferrum mens prona viris, animæque capaces
Mortis, et ignavum eſt redituræ parcere vitæ.

Nothing can be nobler than the developement of this principle in the juſtly admired Caractacus of Maſon, where the general of the Britons addreſſes the Roman captives doomed to the ſacerdotal knife.

———Does there breathe
A wretch ſo 'palled with the vain fear of death
Can call this cruelty? 'tis love, 'tis mercy;
And grant, ye gods, if e'er I'm made a captive,
I meet the like fair treatment from the foe,
Whoſe ſtronger ſtar quells mine.

* *Uxores habent deni duodenique inter ſe communes, et maxime fratres cum fratribus, et parentes cum liberis. Cæſaris Comment. de Bello Gallico*, lib. v. ſect. xiv. The wife of Argetecoxus, a Britiſh chief, being reproached on account of this cuſtom by the empreſs Julia, replied with artleſs ingenuouſneſs, "We Britiſh dames give openly and honeſtly to valour and worth thoſe favours which you Roman ladies beſtow ſecretly and with diſhonour on the vileſt of your ſlaves."

Licentiouſneſs;

Licentiouſneſs; let modern manners bluſh,
Whoſe virtue is in ſecreſy alone,
Whoſe honour is in gold, and vice in want.
The bold Caſſibelan, unequal matched,
Bowed to ſuperior force at length, and gave
A ſhew of tribute to his Roman foe,
Who held his valour famed t' have ſeen this iſle,
And ranked amongſt his boldeſt deeds th' attempt
To give prætorian bonds to Britain, while
He turned exultant and in triumph back.
Exultant! why? indeed he had more cauſe
Than baſe Caligula*; but was it much?

* Alluding to the well known ſtory of Caligula's mock expedition againſt Britain. Though Julius Cæſar takes great merit to himſelf in his Commentaries for his attempt upon this iſland, yet, as Tacitus pertinently remarks, he did not conquer Britain; he only ſhewed it to the Romans; *poteſt videri oſtendiſſe poſteris, non tradidiſſe*; and, in fact, the Britons enjoyed their freedom above ninety years after this invaſion: it was not till the reign of the emperor Claudius that they were in part ſubdued.

CARACTACUS*

CARACTACUS next claims the flowing line.
O could my Muſe ſublime with Maſon † ſoar,

* To Caſſibelan, in the chief command in Britain, ſucceeded Tenuantius, who, as well as Cunobelin, the next prince, reigned independently and proſperouſly, and upon amicable terms with the Romans. Very little has come down to us of theſe times of tranquillity and happineſs; and until our attention is arouſed by the prominent character of Caractacus, the Britiſh hiſtory appears of little conſequence. Togodumnus and Caractacus, the two ſons of Cunobelin, reigned either jointly or ſeparately in Britain, when Claudius, at the inſtigation of a ſecond Mandubratius, one Bericus, undertook the conqueſt. By the internal diviſions and animoſities which exiſted in the country, the prætor, Aulus Plautius, ſucceeded in ſubduing a conſiderable part of the iſland. Togodumnus was killed in battle againſt Plautius, who likewiſe defeated Caractacus. The loſs of the intermediate books of the Annals of Tacitus between the VIth and the XIth, renders it uncertain whether this Caractacus be the ſame with the intrepid leader of the Britons, whom that hiſtorian has ſo nobly immortalized in his XIIth book. He there appears as prince or king of the Silures, and maintaining for nine years an inflexible oppoſition to the Romans, he ſhines conſpicuouſly as one of the nobleſt and moſt redoubted adverſaries of Rome. *Unde fama ejus evecta inſulas, et proximas provincias pervagata, per Italiam quoque celebrabatur: avebantque viſere, quis ille, tot per annos, opes noſtras ſpreviſſet. Ne Romæ quidem ignobile Caractaci nomen erat; et Cæſar dum ſuum decus extollit, addidit gloriam victo.*

† Whoſe admirable dramatic poems of Caractacus and Elfrida will ever remain noble monuments of his genius.

Calliope

Calliope herſelf would deem the ſong
Worthy the hero of my humbler verſe:
Rivalled by few when free, in chains by none,
Like a ſtrong oak, the foreſt's nobleſt boaſt,
Upreared, reſiſtful to the war of winds,
Nor rived but by the fierceſt thunderbolt,
And proſtrate, ſtill majeſtical in ruin,
Caractacus the warmeſt ſtrain demands:
See where with his Silures *, he threat'ning lowers
Along the mountain's brow, or ſkirts the flood,
Or, deep-intrenched 'midſt ragged cliffs, defies
His country's proud invaders—many a year,
Like a fierce ſword of vengeance, Caractac †
Hangs o'er, appals, conſounds, and ſtrikes at Rome;
At laſt, on one bold ſtake he ſets his fate;
Prepares his Britons for a generous aim;

* The Silures, a brave and reſolute people, who inhabited the mountainous country of South Wales, together with Monmouthſhire and Herefordſhire, and were not ſubdued by the Romans, even after the captivity of their courageous general, till the reign of Veſpaſian.

† The termination of the name of the Britiſh general being obviouſly Roman, it has been thought allowable occaſionally to ſuppreſs it.

Calls

Calls them to conqueſt and to liberty;
Recounts the deeds his anceſtors had done;
Urges them on to emulate thoſe deeds,
And ſteels their hearts and hands with triple force:
Eager they pant to ſtruggle with the foe,
And ſhouting, hail their country's general,
Their country's father.—Oh! but what avail
Their ardent valour 'gainſt the giant-ſtroke
Of diſcipline and veteran Roman bands:
The long and hardily diſputed field
Flows with our Britiſh blood; Oſtorius * ſtands
Confeſt the maſter of their fertile iſle.
And ſhall Caractacus outlive this ſhock?
Shall he behold his country deep enſlaved
Without the power, as erſt, to bare his arm
In ſtern retaliation on her foes?
Yes! for his country's ſake, opprobrious flight
Is meritorious virtue, firm reſolved
To grapple for the laſt, the punieſt wreck,
Manly he drags the load of life, nor apes

* Oſtorius Scapula, appointed proprætor of Britain after Aulus Plautius.

The Roman's pufillanimous retreat
From ills he cannot bear.—No! he reſolves
Again the arduous conteſt to attempt,
Again to urge the fiercely ſcowling race,
Who now with murmurs bow beneath the yoke,
Wildly to turn their maſſy chains to arms,
To daſh their Roman tyrants to deſtruction,
Leaving their fetters ruſting in a maſs
Of brains, and gore, and ſkulls, and clotted hair.
But oh! Brigantian Cartiſmandua now,
In whom Caractacus had ſought a friend *,
The traitreſs! yields the noble hero up
To make her peace with Rome. The lion now
Is caged and kept for ſhew—Oh! Caractac!
How muſt thy uncontrouled heart have bled?
Not for thy chains, but thoſe thy country wears;
For, ſternly philoſophic, now behold
The hardy Briton pinioned 'fore the ſeat

* Caractacus, after his defeat, ſolicited the protection and aid of Cartiſmandua, queen of the Brigantes, a powerful and warlike nation that inhabited the northern parts of England, but was by her baſely betrayed, and delivered priſoner to the Romans.

Of

Of dread Auguſtus: " What art thou to me!
" Though lord of Rome—(God wot—how juſtly
" ſo—)
" Why muſt our diſtant ſhores, another world,
" Removed from thine by nature, be thine too?—
" Behold me here a ſlave; I was a prince
" Greater than thou—my ſubjects were my friends
" And not my ſlaves—from royal lineage born,
" I reigned, the laſt of a long race of kings,
" O'er warlike freemen—had I in this noon
" Of proſperous glory known the golden curb *
" Diſcretion hangs on bravery, then perchance,
" Cæſar had ſued to me for peace, and claimed
" My equal friendſhip. Grandeur, wealth, were mine,
" And martial ſplendor; I had horſes, arms,
" And men to wield them;—I had beauties too,
" To whom all that Italia boaſts are tanned,
" Freckled, and ſun-burnt—Why ſhould I part
with theſe?
" Becauſe a Julius once, a proud dictator,
" Uſurper of his country's liberties,

* Vide the laſt ſcene of Maſon's Caractacus.

 " Dared

" Dared to come o'er and take a peep at us?
" Though force be right at Rome, and Cæſar aim
" To lord it univerſal o'er the world,
" Shall the world tamely crouch at Cæſar's footſtool?
" If I withſtood thy Roman uſurpation,
" And would be free without imperial leave,
" 'Twas not for foreign conqueſt that I ſtrove;
" 'Twas not to rack, diſtreſs, and haraſs ſlaves;
" But 't was to free my country from a yoke
" Heavier than thine now bears—a foreign one—
" A bitter, cruel, and ungilded one.
" Ye Gods! why ſhould a frail, a very man,
" Be lord of half the world, and awe the ſouls
" Of free—no—bondmen—for my ſoul's unawed,
" As truſt me, Emperor, is our Britiſh mould.
" Send me to dungeons and confine my limbs,
" To thee I cower not—but admire thy fate;
" To that I bow me, and adore the hand
" That lifts thee high and lays me in the duſt."
Caractacus, Britain's ſtrong Hannibal,
Subdued, makes Rome's dominion here ſecure,
And the ſame honour by the ſenate 's given

To

To bold Oſtorius, as before had graced
Scipio, the conqueror of Afric's wilds,
Or the famed vanquiſher of Grecian Perſes *.

BOADICEA †.

In Amazonian beauty next appears
Albion's Bellona, fierce Boadicea,
Whom Roman tyranny hath galled too long,
Too ſharply, not vindictive to ariſe,
Goddeſs

* The victory gained over Caractacus by Oſtorius was extolled at Rome to the ſkies; it was equalled to thoſe of Scipio over Syphax, and of Paulus Emilius over Perſes, and the ſame triumphal honours were decreed to the conqueror of Britain as had been granted to thoſe of Africa and of Greece.

† Called alſo Voadicea, Bundeica, Bunduca, Boodicea, queen of the Iceni, the ancient inhabitants of Norfolk, Suffolk, Cambridgeſhire and Huntingdonſhire. Her huſband, Praſutagus, in order to ſecure the protection and conciliate the good will of the emperor Nero, made him coheir of his treaſures conjointly with his two daughters. However, as ſoon as he was in his grave, the emperor's officers ſeized on all his effects in their maſter's name. This violence and injuſtice was reſented and reſiſted by his widow Boadicea, a woman of an heroic

 courage

Goddeſs of war, and wheel her thundering car
In headlong, wild deſtruction through their ranks;
Their brutal injuries have ſteeled her heart,
And rouſed th' Icenians to a fell revenge:
Her's and her daughters' ſcorpion ſhames ariſe
To ſtimulate the deep-dyed bloody ſcene:
Full fourſcore thouſand mangled victims mark,
In one dread day to Rome, the vengeance dire
Of the incenſed queen—what ſtreams around
Of Roman blood, what cries of deep deſpair
Re-echo through Camelodunum's fields*,

Where

courage and noble ſtature, accompliſhments which, among the ancient Britons, were frequently united to commanding beauty and inſpiring affability, in the female ſex. To the refuſal of juſtice, the tyrannizing Romans added the moſt poignant indignities. Boadicea was publicly flagellated, and her two daughters violated by the meaneſt ſoldiers. This was the memorable occaſion of the revolt which ſhook to the center the ſtability of the Roman power in Britain. The Iceni, more immediately intereſted to revenge the quarrel of their queen, groaned likewiſe, in common with the ſurrounding vanquiſhed nations, under the moſt intolerable oppreſſion, and the inſurrection was general throughout the Roman territories.

* Camelodunum, (according to Camden, Malden in Eſſex) formerly the royal ſeat of Cunobelin, was then a Roman colony.

Where flames in dreadful maſtery ariſe,
And ſend in ſmoke, to glut Andate's hate,
At once, the temples of the Roman gods,
Her rivals, and their cheated votaries.

For ſhame, ye generous Britons! Ah! forbear
Theſe cruelties unmanly, rally round
The ſtandard of your queen and liberty,
But ſcorn to mingle babes' and women's cries
With the dire groans that tell th' oppreſſor's death;
Follow not, frantic, the deſpairing ire
Of Boadicea, to madneſs ſtung;
Ah no! it nought avails!—Ye too, have felt,
Have deeply felt, the rowel's ſharpeſt point,
And like a ſmothered fire, long, long kept down,
Ye now ſweep forth with the wild whirlwind's rage.
Oh! had your valiant arms had cooler heads,

colony. It was wholly deſtroyed, together with Verulam, another populous ſettlement, and eighty thouſand, or, as Tacitus has it, ſeventy thouſand, Roman citizens and confederates were maſſacred, without diſtinction of age or ſex, by the unreſtrained and ungovernable vengeance of the injured Britons. At Camelodunum the legionaries were driven, as a laſt refuge, into a Roman temple, where they met a wretched and unavoidable fate in the conflagration of it by the aſſailants.

The haughty Roman ne'er had reared again
In iron wrath, oppreſſion's heavy hand;
But now, impetuoſity alone
Hath loſt you liberty and dear revenge.
Suetonius * hears the din of your revolt;
He flies to face you as a Roman ſhould;
He longs to meaſure ſwords with the fell queen
Who urges on your fury to deſtroy
His Roman legions and his Roman gods.
Bold on the other ſide, with loud acclaim,
The Britons hail their queen—Behold ſhe comes,
Terrific—high on an ivory car advanced,
Whoſe gloſſy ſides, emboſſed with uncouth ſhapes
In ſculpture rude, ſhall, ere the ſun be ſet,
Exchange their pale-faced uniformity
For checquered ſcarlet, and in horrid guiſe,
Diſtained with gore, in purple wrath, atteſt
Her direful efforts to revenge her wrongs.
Four fiery courſers ſhake in angry mood

* Suetonius Paulinus, who, after the intermediate proprætorſhips of Aulus Didius and Verannius, ſucceeded Oſtorius in the government of Britain. He was engaged in an enterprize againſt Mona, or Angleſey, when the revolt broke out.

Their

Their brazen ſcales, and proudly drag the ſeat
Of noble Boadice, * who, great in arms,
Pre-eminently bold, high on a throne
Of crimſon, ſeems a dread Tiſiphone,
While on a ſeat below her daughters frown
Like fierce Alecto and Megara dire,
Each with her javelin, and her miſſile darts,
Prepared to wipe in Roman blood away
Their raviſhment's diſgrace.—With nervous arm
The wary charioteer directs the courſe,
Curbing th' impetuous ſteeds, while near at hand
His bundled ſpears rattle a threatening ſound,
And caught by ſtarts, and launched amid the foe,
Seem lightning iſſuing from an argent cloud,
The glorious emblem of the warlike car:
Dreadful on ſcythed wheels † it rolls along,
And leaves a broad and beaten track of death,
Mowing with edge ſo keen, and ſcope ſo wide,

* Here the ſame liberty is taken with the name of Boadicea as before with that of Caractacus.

† The covins or war-chariots of the Britons were, according to Pomponius Mela, armed with ſcythes and hooks projecting out at the axle-trees.

That

That the cloſe-gleaning hand of Fate can ſcarce
Follow to reap the horrid harveſt ſtrewed
Along this gore-drenched highway of deſtruction.
Like a fierce whirlwind from Norwegian heights,
Pent in between two rocks, thence burſting out
In one compacted ſtream of urgent air,
Sweeping a road of deſolation o'er
The plain, and leaving on its brink the half
Of the poor cot its fury has deſtroyed,
So direful ſwoops her aweful chariot forth,
And leads the way to victory or death.
  Afront her battle's ſtrength ſhe rides along,
And riſing, thus harangues her hardy troops:
" Britons!—though various tribes now form your
  " ranks,
" In every eye, lo! unanimity,
" The ſureſt earneſt of a glorious day,
" Conjoined with courage, bids me fairly hope
" Th' adveſperating ſun ſhall gild this field,
" Rejoicing that the morn will bid him view
" A ſoil enfranchiſed from a hated yoke.
" Full oft before, under a woman's ſway,

" Ye've dared the lion in his den*, and if
" My ſoul prophetic err not, future time
" Shall hail Britannia's glory at the height
" Under her queens. Fight nobly, countrymen!
" I lead you not, in vain and empty ſtriſe,
" To war for bawble titles, or a crown
" To deck your queen; I come not now to vaunt
" My royal birth, or fight for paltry wealth;
" As one of you I come; the meaneſt hind
" That meets my eye is dearer to my ſoul,
" As fellow Briton, than the gawdy toys
" Theſe Romans prize ſo high; and has he not,
" Have not ye all, a ſacred cauſe like mine,
" That to the blunteſt ſword ſhall lend an edge
" To pierce a Roman's heart?—Your queen has felt
" Their power ferocious—the ſad tale ye know,
" The deep contamination of our race;
" Too well ye all by ſad experience know

* The Roman hiſtorians, who have treated of Britain, inform us, that the Britiſh were often headed by women, and that they never made ſex an objection to the attainment, not only of the regal title, but of the command of their armies.

The

" The pinnacle that Roman luſt hath reached;
" Their chains are galling and their whips are fierce,
" And will ye not revenge?"—Revenge! they cry;
To the far diſtant hills, revenge! reſounds,
And the loud ſhout aſtounds the adverſe hoſt. *
Boadicea waves her lance, and huſhed they ſtand;
Thus ſhe proceeds: " Then let them ſternly come;
" Backed by ſuch noble and undaunted ſouls,
" I'll meet them in the midſt, and drive them back;
" And let Bellona, war-famed goddeſs, come
" To aid them if ſhe will; I'll urge my car
" To where the thickeſt ſcene of death ſhall ſhew,
" To find the vaunted goddeſs of their war,
" And buckle with her in their army's eye.

* In the ſpeech which Tacitus puts into the mouth of Boadicea on this occaſion, ſhe aſſerts of the Romans, *ne ſtrepitum quidem et clamorem tot millium, nedum impetus et manus perlaturos*; which, however it may ſeem characteriſtic of female vainglorious bravery, is too much ſo for the elevated ſoul of the Britiſh heroine; it is therefore put here as a fact, that the ſhouts of the Britons reached and intimidated their enemies; and this was probably literally the caſe, ſince Suetonius commences his harangue to his ſoldiers by an exhortation, *ut ſpernerent ſonores barbarorum et inanes minas. Taciti Ann.* lib. xiv.

" Andate!

" Andate! hear my prayer! grant me this day!
" Give it to dear revenge and liberty,
" And take the reſt, I care not; and if fate
" Wills that my country ſhall be ſlaved again,
" Give to the free-born warriors of to-day
" To die with me in this moſt glorious ſtrife,
" For live I will not if my country fall."
Now onward to the ſhock the battles move,
As if th' Atlantic and Pacific ſeas,
The narrow Darian iſthmus rent between,
Their raging billows frowning o'er th' abrupt,
Curling their foaming tops, and roaring through
Fragments of rocks and woods in ruin wild,
Through ſplintered mountains and through caverns deep,
Should meet each other with a horrid craſh,
Reverberating 'long th' indented ſhores
Of either vaſt peninſula; ſo ſeems
The brunt of the fate-fraughted conteſt; long
The doubtful battle equal rages o'er
The corſe-ſtrewed field; at laſt the legions, ſhamed
So long at bay to ſtand, with thick-ſhort ſteps,
Compacted,

Compacted, firm, pour on the Britiſh ranks,
And pierce their looſe-embodied creſcent troop,
And as an iron wedge *, by labour's hand
Impelled, disjoins the cloſeſt timber's grain,
Break their battalia.—Boadice now hies
From wing to wing, rallying her fainting bands
With vigorous arm and ſtern imperious voice,
And where a flying Briton meets her car,
Transfixed by Boadicea's ſpear, he writhes,
And vents his coward ſoul: awhile ſhe ſhines
A blazing, peſtilential ſtar of death,
Through dark confuſion's miſt; what mortal worth
Could do, was done, but fate ordained that day,
Proud-creſted queen! thy reign and life ſhould end;
For when the field was loſt, ſhe ſcornful turned
Her eyes to Heaven, and, maddening with deſpair,
Ruſhed to the other world, to chide the power
That would not hear her prayer for deep revenge †.

VENU-

* Tacitus, in his account of this battle, informs us, that the Romans attacked the Britons in the form of a *cuneus* or wedge.

† Boadicea, in deſpair, poiſoned herſelf. Our dramatic writers,

VENUSIUS*.

VENUSIUS too awhile upheld the cauſe
Of freedom, and oppoſed, implacable,

His

writers, Beaumont and Fletcher, in their tragedy of Bonduca, have made her two daughters ſtab themſelves; Mr. Glover, in his Boadicea, has preferred poiſoning the eldeſt, but he has preſerved the youngeſt to become the wife of a Roman officer. Authentic Hiſtory is ſilent reſpecting their fate. Some vague mention, indeed, is made of them in the ſtrange jumble that has been called the hiſtory of Scotland during this period, but the palpable inconſiſtency and improbability of the account renders it unworthy of further regard.

* Venuſius, prince of the Brigantes, the next in military experience and reputation, ſucceeded the renowned Caractacus as general of the Britons. We find him in arms againſt Oſtorius and his immediate ſucceſſors in the proprætorſhip of Britain. Rapin ſays, he joined the Iceni and Trinobantes in their revolt under the conduct of Boadicea; but as he is likewiſe introduced by Tacitus in the third book of his Auguſtan hiſtory, reſiſting the arms of Vectius Bolanus, third proprætor after Suetonius, his commemoration comes properly after that of the heroic queen we have juſt left. His implacable enmity to Rome, firſt ariſing from the natural animoſity of a free and martial mind towards the invaders and oppreſſors of his native land, was fomented and exalted to the higheſt pitch by their abetment of his faithleſs queen, Cartiſmandua. This woman bore a moſt

execrable

His enmity againſt the ſcathful ſtride,
Coloſſal, of dominion, Rome's ſole aim:
His was whilom to fold in nuptial bliſs
Bright Cartiſmandua, beauteous as the fruit,
Inticing, of the interdicted tree,
That neighboured in fair Eden's vale with that
Of Life; as ſequent bitter too the taſte;
Adultreſs, traitreſs, in the lovelieſt form,
She owned a ſerpent's heart; 't was ſhe betrayed
Venuſius' noble friend, Caractacus;
She leagued againſt her country with his foes;
She took the vileſt wretch to ſhare her bed,
And gloried in the deed; the triple wound,
In honour, love, and patriotiſm, ſtruck
Deep in Venuſius' breaſt, and raiſed a ſtorm

execrable character. Beſide sthe indelible ſtain, which her treachery towards Caractacus infixes upon her memory, we learn that ſhe procured the aſſaſſination of her huſband's brother, and other of his relatives and friends; that ſhe entered into a traitorous league with the Romans, and, vainly confident in their ſupport, openly defied Venuſius, and admitting his menial ſervant or armour-bearer, Vellocatus, to her bed, endeavoured likewiſe to make him partner of her throne; but in reſult Tacitus acknowledges that, *regnum Venuſio, bellum nobis relictum.*

That

That whelmed deſtruction o'er the luſtful queen,
And drove her with her paramour to hide
Her hated head among her Roman friends,
While, re-eſtabliſhed in his regal ſeat,
Venuſius ſhook his drowzy love away,
And for a time withheld from Rome's domain
What treachery and inſatiate luſt had loſt.

GALGACUS*.

A NORTHERN chief ſucceeded as the prop
Of independence; GALGACUS the bold,
Who on the utmoſt verge of Scotland's wilds
Withſtood Agricola, content to keep,

Like

* We find no mention of the final overthrow or death of Venuſius, although Petilius Cerealis, who ſucceeded Veƈtius Bolanus in the proprætorſhip, it is ſaid, ravaged the greateſt part of the country of the Brigantes. Julius Frontinus, the next Roman governor, had the glory of ſubduing the ſtrong and warlike nation of the Silures. But this, and all the preceding achievements of the Romans in the iſland, are eclipſed by the ſucceſſive

Like Cato in his little Utica,
A nook of land, though barren, waſte, and bleak,
Free

ceſſive victories, and the perſevering genius of Julius Agricola; he firſt attacked the yet unconquered Ordovices, the martial and hardy inhabitants of the mountains of North Wales, whom he nearly exterminated, and proceeding againſt the ſacred iſland of the Druids, Mona or Angleſey, the conqueſt of which had before been in vain attempted by Suetonius Paulinus, the iſlanders, ceding to the impetuoſity of his attack, ſought peace, and ſurrendered themſelves. He then turned his arms againſt the North, and by the conſummate policy of building fortreſſes, and wintering with his army in the country he had conquered (having remarked that the Romans had before generally loſt in the winter what they had gained in the ſummer, for want of ſuch ſtable precautions) in the courſe of ſeven laborious campaigns, he annexed to the Roman empire the ſouthern part of Scotland, as far as the rivers Bodotria and Glota (the preſent friths of Forth and Clyde) the iſthmus between which he ſecured by a range of forts. In the eighth year of the war he advanced beyond theſe limits, and encountered upon the hill of Grampium the intrepid Galgacus. In the Chronicle of the kings of Scotland, Galgacus is called Galdus; of his name and its etymology, Gordon gives the following account: Galgacus was latinized by the Romans from two highland appellations, viz. *Gald* and *Cachach*; the firſt *Gald*, being the proper name, and the ſecond an adjection to it, from the battles he had fought; it ſignifies the ſame as *præliosus*; Gald the fighter of battles. *Gal* means ſtrangers, and was probably applied to

thoſe

Free from the hated print of tyrants' feet.
Full eight * well-fought and hard campaigns he ſtrove,

Ere,

thoſe Britons who, diſdaining the ſervitude of the Romans, retreated northwards, and united with the natives of Caledonia. Hence, poſſibly, the origin of the *Galic* language and nation. Fingal, Crugal, Congal, Gaul, and other names that occur in the poems attributed to Oſſian, ſeem derived from the ſame ſource.

* Moſt writers have aſcribed the defeat of Galgacus to the ſeventh campaign of Agricola; but although, on following with the finger Tacitus's account of his expeditions, we can only determine the actions of ſeven ſummers, yet Agricola's ſpeech to his army on this occaſion commences, *octavus annus eſt, commilitones, ex quo virtute et auſpiciis imperii Romani, fide atque opera veſtra Britanniam viciſtis.* This has in general been thought an error of tranſcription, yet as the actions which are ſuppoſed to relate to the ſeventh campaign are more numerous, and more important than thoſe of any one preceding year, and there is no poſitive determination of the time elapſed between the ſixth year of Agricola's adminiſtration and his victory over Galgacus, the latter may, with as much propriety, be placed in the eighth. It may not be improper here to remark, the improbability that the Roman general ſhould have penetrated, in the third campaign, much farther than he did in the ſucceeding one, that is, as far as the frith of Tay, as *uſque ad Taum* is almoſt univerſally rendered; but Rapin, with more congruity, thinks Tacitus meant the river Tweed. This or

Ere, on the Grampian hill, the Roman met
This laſt, beſt, choſen warrior of the land:
Firm as St. Kilda's * rocky iſle, he ſtood
On utmoſt Thule's edge, and broke the waves
Of deluging ambition, that around,
In ſpumy wrath, vain ſplaſhed their bootleſs force.
Hear with what manly eloquence his words
Pourtray his fearleſs, his undaunted ſoul,
When, at his army's head, he leads them forth
Againſt their country's foes: † " The cauſe, my friends,

" The

the *Ithunæ æſtuarium* of Ptolemy (Solway frith) ſeems the more natural progreſſive ſtation of the third winter, and many circumſtances, were the conteſt of conſequence, might be adduced in favour of this opinion.

* St. Kilda, or Hirta, as it is called by the natives, is the fartheſt to the weſtward of all the Hebrides; it is a ſolitary ſpot, bleak and ſtony, and of trifling extent, which has become famous by the many deſcriptions given of it, ſolely on account of its lone and diſtant ſituation.

† The ſpeech of Galgacus to his army, as recorded by Tacitus, is here much curtailed, and only ſome of the moſt ſtriking points in it exhibited. It is one of the moſt beautiful

paſſages

" The dire neceſſity that draws our ſwords 385
" This day, in laſt defence of liberty,

" So

paſſages of that eloquent hiſtorian. The art of compreſſing in pathetic language, with preciſion and energy, all the topics that can inſpire the heart of man with the moſt generous love of liberty, is here diſplayed in full perfection. There is nothing to compare with it in any other hiſtoric page of either the Greeks or the Romans. The ſpeech of Porus to Alexander has been greatly admired; but excellent as it is, it ſhrinks and fades away before the irreſiſtible warmth and ſpirit of the Caledonian orator. Even the ſpeech of Agricola, which follows immediately, is tame and feeble, when oppoſed to the ardour, the impetuoſity, and the vehemence of the Britiſh chief. We ſee Tacitus exerting all his art to decorate the character of his father-in-law; but he had neither the ſame vein of ſentiment, nor the ſame noble fervour of liberty, to ſupport the cauſe of an ambitious conqueror. In the harangue of Galgacus, the pleaſure of the reader ſprings from two principles: he admires the enthuſiaſm of the brave Caledonian, and at the ſame time applauds the noble hiſtorian, who draws up a charge againſt the tyranny of his own countrymen, and generouſly liſts on the ſide of freedom. The harmonious proſe of Mr. Murphy, the ingenious tranſlator of Tacitus, whoſe ſentiments on the ſubject are tranſcribed in the above paſſage, though decorated with the utmoſt grace of diction, of which our language is capable, is yet but inadequately expreſſive of the inimitable dignity and energy of this oration. No verſion indeed, either deviating in the exalted laxity of poetry from the

" So fires my breaſt, ſo raiſes all my hopes,
" That from this time I date fair freedom's reign
" O'er

forceful elegance and ſimplicity of the original, or more cloſely following it in the well-turned periods of proſe, can perfectly convey the ſpirit of it. The length of it alſo, perhaps greater than can, with propriety, be given to the harangue of a general, within ſight of the enemy, and on the point of engaging, was an objection to the entire introduction of it in the poem; but as it contains a moſt lively and maſterly picture of the unbounded luſt of power, the nefarious and oppreſſive ſyſtem of the Romans, as well as of the intolerable hardſhips, the vexatious injuries, they inflicted on the nations they had conquered, and of the indignant and noble ſpirit that animated the ſturdy mountaineers, who here, as at the laſt refuge of independence, reſiſted the torrent of ambition, the claſſic reader will not be diſpleaſed to peruſe the whole of the Latin original in this place: *Quotiens cauſſas belli et neceſſitatem noſtram intueor*, ſaid the hero, *magnus mihi animus eſt, hodiernum diem, conſenſumque veſtrum, initium libertatis totius Britanniæ fore. Nam et univerſi ſervitutis expertes, et nullæ ultra terræ, ac ne mare quidem ſecurum, imminente nobis claſſe Romanâ: ita prælium atque arma, quæ fortibus honeſta, eadem etiam ignavis tutiſſima ſunt. Priores pugnæ, quibus adverſus Romanos variâ fortunâ certatum eſt, ſpem ac ſubſidium in noſtris manibus habebant: quia nobiliſſimi totius Britanniæ, eoque in ipſis penetrabilis ſiti, nec ſervientium littora adſpicientes, oculos quoque a contactu dominationis inviolatos habebamus. Nos, terrarum ac libertatis extremos, receſſus ipſe ac ſinus famæ in hunc diem defendit: hunc terminus Britanniæ patet: atque omne ignotum pro magnifico*

eſt.

" O'er all that Rome in Britain has uſurped.
" This narrow ridge, the far extremity
" Of

eſt. Sed nullæ jam ultra gens, nihil niſi fluctus et ſaxa; et inferiores Romani: quorum ſuperbiam fruſtra per obſequium et modeſtiam effugeris: raptores orbis, poſtquam cuncta vaſtantibus defuere terræ, et mare ſcrutantur: ſi locuples hoſtis eſt, avari; ſi pauper, ambitioſi: quos non oriens, non occidens ſatiaverit: ſoli omnium opes atque inopiam pari affectu concupiſcunt: auferre, trucidare, rapere falſis nominibus, imperium; atque ubi ſolitudinem faciunt, pacem appellant. Liberos cuique ac propinquos ſuos natura cariſſimos eſſe voluit: hi per delectus, alibi ſervituri, auferuntur, conjuges ſororeſque etſi hoſtilem libidinem effugiant, nomine amicorum atque hoſpitum polluuntur. Bona fortunaſque in tributum egerunt; in annonam frumentum: corpora ipſa ac manus, ſilvis ac paludibus emuniendis, verbera inter ac contumelias, conterunt. Nata ſervituti mancipia ſemel veneunt, atque ultro a dominis aluntur; Britannia ſervitutem ſuam quotidie emit, quotidie paſcit. Ac ſicut in familia recentiſſimus quiſque ſervorum et conſervis ludibrio eſt; ſic in hoc orbis terrarum vetere famulatu novi nos et viles in excidium petimur. Neque enim arva nobis, aut metalla, aut portus ſunt, quibus exercendis reſervemur. Virtus porro ac ferocia ſubjectorum ingrata imperantibus: et longinquitas ac ſecretum ipſum quo tutius, eo ſuſpectius. Ita ſublatâ ſpe veniæ, tandem ſumite animum, tam quibus ſalus, quam quibus gloria cariſſima eſt. Trinobantes, feminâ duce, exurere coloniam, expugnare caſtra, ac niſi felicitas in ſocordiam vertiſſet, exſuere jugum potuere: nos integri et indomiti, et libertatem non in præſentia laturi, primo ſtatim congreſſu non oſtendemus quos ſibi Caledonia viros ſepoſuerit. An eamdem Romanis in bello virtutem, quam in pace

 laſciviam

" Of habitable earth, is all that's left;
" Beyond, where northward, icy gloom appears,
" Or rocks ariſe, or dreary oceans roll;
" Hear at your backs, the ſurging billows roar,
" And fronting, ſee the legions of the foe; 395
" Hence there is no retreat, and here ye ſtand

laſciviam adeſſe creditis! Noſtris illi diſſenſionibus ac diſcordiis clari, vitia hoſtium in gloriam exercitûs ſui vertunt: quem contractum ex diverſiſſimis gentibus, ut ſecundæ res tenent, ita adverſæ diſſolvent: niſi ſi Gallos, et Germanos, et (pudet dictu) Britannorum pleroſque, dominationi alienæ ſanguinem commodantes, diutius tamen hoſtes quam ſervos, fide et affectu tenere putatis: metus et terror eſt, infirma vincula caritatis, quæ ubi removeris, qui timere deſierint, odiſſe incipient. Omnia victoriæ incitamenta pro nobis ſunt: nullæ Romanos conjuges accendunt: nulli parentes fugam exprobraturi ſunt: aut nulla pleriſque patria, aut alia eſt: paucos numeros circum trepidos ignorantiâ, cœlum ipſum ac mare et ſilvas, ignota omnia circumſpectantes, clauſos quodammodo ac vinctos dii nobis tradiderunt. Ne terreat vanus adſpectus, et auri fulgor atque argenti, quod neque tegit, neque vulnerat. In ipſa hoſtium acie inveniemus noſtras manus: agnoſcent Britanni ſuam cauſum: recordabuntur Galli priorem libertatem deſerent illos ceteri Germani, tamquam nuper Uſipii reliquerunt. Nec quidquam ultra formidinis: vacua caſtella, ſenum coloniæ, inter male parentes et injuſte imperantes, ægra municipia et diſcordantia: hîc dux, hîc exercitus, ibi tributa et metalla, et ceteræ ſervientium pœnæ, quas in æternum proferre, aut ſtatim ulciſci, in hoc campo eſt. Proinde ituri in aciem, et majores veſtros et poſteros, cogitate.

" A troop

" A troop of way-worn deer, chaſed to their haunts;
" Then turn upon the hunters, and redeem
" The glorious birthright Britons ever claim,
" And nobly daring, be as nobly bleſt.
" Menace for menace, blow for blow return
" Upon yon bluſhleſs rifflers of the world,
" At beſt ſucceſsful robbers; eaſtern ſuns
" And weſtern waves, have ſeen their lawleſs bands
" Ranſack and murder, for the luſt of wealth,
" And, ſtill unſatisfied, they now advance
" To pillage e'en your poverty of what
" Alone remains, content and independence:
" With theſe we muſt not,—will not, ever part.
" Too well we know all-graſping Rome demands
" More than or man or nature can endure.
" Behold yon ſouthern plains, oppreſſion there
" Stalks with a giant ſtep, his hundred arms,
" Wide o'er the land, the huge Briareus throws;
" And is there ought beyond the vulture's reach?
" At wealth he graſps, at blooming beauty graſps,
" For ever graſps, and when nought elſe remains,
" Groping he graſps at air, and e'en of this,

" Nature's

" Nature's ineſtimable freeſt gift,
" He would debar mankind, could nature yield
" To brutal force; for us, my noble friends,
" Yet heavier, maſſier chains the Romans forge;
" Unconquered, undebaſed, like reſtive ſteeds
" That yet have known no curb, or biting ſpur,
" Our untamed, inborn love of liberty
" Would aſk no common yoke; but let them ruſt,
" Thoſe fetters that were deſtined for our limbs,
" We live to-morrow free, or die to-day.
" Look on yon glittering Roman hoſt, is there
" One breaſt, beneath the golden mail, that pants
" For liberty? Is there one arm that ſtrikes
" To guard his country? One that ſtrikes to ſave
" His fields from fire, his infants from the ſword,
" His couch from luſt, his daughters from pollution,
" And from eternal infamy his name *?

* And what are fifty, what a thouſand ſlaves,
Matched to the ſinew of a ſingle arm
That ſtrikes for liberty? that ſtrikes to ſave
His fields from fire, his infants from the ſword,
His couch from luſt, his daughters from pollution,
And his large honours from eternal infamy?
Brooke's Guſtavus Vaſa.

" A herd

" A herd of mercenaries, mixture ſtrange
" Of Gauls and Germans, muſt I baſhful add,
" Degenerate Britons too, thoſe threatening bands
" Appal not freemen; this I ſee you feel,
" Ruſh therefore to the fight, remember well
" The glory of your anceſtors, and think,
" That on your ſwords your children's fate depends."
Though boaſtful Rome deciſive calls, the field
That here, Agricola of Galgacus
Huge ſtriving won, yet Caledonia ne'er
Submitted to the victor; nay, his bands
Retreated from th' inhoſpitable ſhore,
After this grand and empire-giving blow,
Immediate to th' Horeſti's friendly plains, *
And ne'er again beyond Bodotria fought.

EREC-

* Tacitus, after relating this action, which he pretends was a deciſive one, and in which it is ſaid that 10,000 Britons, and only 340 Romans, were ſlain, adds, that Agricola, finding it impracticable to proceed farther on account of the advanced ſeaſon of the year, marched back into the country of the Horeſti, *et exacta jam æſtate ſpargi bellum nequibat, in fines Horeſtorum exercitum deducit.* It is evident that the Romans never could penetrate into Caledonia, ſo as to ſecure the dominion of any

part

ERECTION OF THE ROMAN WALLS IN BRITAIN *.

SUCCEEDING ages, from behind their walls
Immenſe, from frith to frith extending o'er,
Peered,

part of it; and although, as we ſhall preſently ſee, the emperor Severus, in his Caledonian expedition, paſſed the forts eſtabliſhed by Agricola, which extended from Glota to Bodotria, yet theſe æſtuaries may be conſidered as the real and utmoſt boundaries of the Roman dominion in Britain. It has however been ſaid, that the maſters of the faireſt and moſt wealthy climates of the globe, turned with contempt from gloomy hills aſſailed by the winter tempeſt, from lakes concealed in a blue miſt, and from cold and lonely heaths, over which the deer of the foreſt were chaſed by a troop of naked barbarians; ſee Appian in Prœem.; but does this agree with Tacitus in Agricola?

Mais comme il ne pouvoit atteindre,
Ils ſont trop verds, dit-il, et bons pour des goujats.
Fit-il pas mieux que de ſe plaindre?

De la Fontaine, le Renard and les Raiſins.

* After the campaigns of Agricola which we have juſt mentioned, we find that his fleet diſcovered the Orcades or Orkneys, and circumnavigating Britain, firſt proved it to be an iſland, which was before only ſurmiſed, or believed from the reports of the bar-

Peered, fearful, at the hardy freeborn race
That ſtill, in native greatneſs, unſubdued,
Prowled

barbarians. From this period to the reign of Adria we have but a ſlender account of the Britiſh affairs. Chriſtianity was firſt introduced about this time, and the chronicle of the abbey of Glaſtonbury, the moſt ancient monaſtic inſtitution in Britain, relates, that one king Arvigarus made a grant of that ſpot to Joſeph of Arimathæa, who is ſuppoſed to have been the Britiſh apoſtle. Juvenal mentions likewiſe a chief of the name of Arvigarus in Britain, in the time of Domitian,

——— *aut de temone Britanno*
Excidet Arvigarus. ———

he muſt however have been one of the tributary princes, whom the policy of the Romans allowed to enjoy a precarious ſhadow of royalty in the provinces that were ſubmiſſive to their government. Under Trajan, the Britons ſeem to have revolted; and that they were ſubdued again appears by Spartian. In the beginning of Adrian's reign, the unruly Britons were ſo ſeriouſly inclined to ſhake off the Roman yoke, that the emperor was neceſſitated to come in perſon to Britain to quell the inſurgents, who were abetted by their ſtill unſubdued brethren of the north. Theſe deſtroyed ſome of Agricola's fortreſſes, and carried their inroads into the heart of the Roman territories. Adrian abandoned to them the country between the two friths and the Tyne, and to ſecure the remainder of the province, threw up his famous wall, commonly called the Pict's wall, eighty miles in length, running through Northumberland and Cumberland,

from

Prowled ſullen through rough Scotia's woody realm.
So when on deſart ſhores proud man deſcends,
And drives the ſhaggy owners of the ſoil,
The brindled lion, and the tyger fell,
The fierce hyæna, and the growling bear,

from the mouth of the Tyne to Solway frith. But the reſtleſs Caledonians, watching every opportunity of haraſſing their inveterate and natural enemies, and ſure of the co-operation and ſuccour of the turbulent inhabitants ſouth of the wall, who were only kept in ſubjection by the ſtrong hand of military deſpotiſm, frequently penetrated beyond this formidable barrier, and carried diſmay and deſolation through the land. They were however repelled, in the reign of Antoninus Pius, by the proprætor Lollius Urbicus, who drove them beyond the friths, and repairing Agricola's forts, united them in one chain by a ſecond wall, drawn acroſs the narrow paſs. The remains of this retrenchment are called in Scotland Graham's dike, from a tradition that a warrior of that name firſt broke over it. The Britons revolted anew in the time of Marcus Antoninus, but were quelled by his proprætor Calphurnius Agricola; and the ſame ſcenes of alternate reſiſtance and conqueſt were acted over again under the diſſolute Commodus, when Ulpius Marcellus commanded in Britain. From this time we hear no more of the inſurrection of the ſouthern Britons, who ſeem now to have been wearied into implicit bondage. Under Commodus, however, we ought further to add, that one Lucius, a Britiſh king, embraced chriſtianity, which is the firſt authenticated inſtance of the eſtabliſhment of our holy religion in this iſland.

Up

Up to the midland heights, there veiled ſecure
In the primeval mountain foreſt's gloom,
The gaunt, grim, diſpoſſeſſed ſavages
Howl in horrific concert diſcontent,
And laſh their ſides, and watch each opened gap
That gives to nightly ravage flocks and herds,
Vainly ſecured by inſufficient folds *.

* Britain, at leaſt ſouth of the walls, being now a Roman province, and the conſequent tranquillity of luxury and eaſe, only occaſionally diſturbed by the inroads of the Caledonians, we in a manner loſe ſight of it for a conſiderable time. Almoſt all that has been recorded of Britain, by the Roman hiſtorians, from the time of Galgacus, to the final departure of their countrymen from the iſland, belongs more properly to the hiſtory of the Roman empire. Liberty and independence, the birthright and characteriſtic paſſion of the Britons, were fled to the moſt inhoſpitable and inacceſſible parts of Caledonia. The interval, therefore, during which the nation was ſwallowed up in the vortex of Roman conqueſt, is here partly filled up with the traditions handed down in the ſongs of the highland bards, and which the diſcerning Gibbon has not thought unworthy of particular notice in his Hiſtory of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire, book I. chap. VI. To enter into an inveſtigation of the authenticity of the poems attributed to Oſſian, whence theſe traditions have become generally known, would, after the ample diſcuſſions of the ſubject which have been entered into, on both ſides of the queſtion, by ſuch able writers as Mr. Macpherſon, Dr. Johnſon, Mr. Smith, Lord Kaimes, &c.

be

be folly and preſumption. Suffice it, that the reſult of a moſt attentive peruſal and mature conſideration of *all* that has been publiſhed on this ſubject, has been the full conviction of their being the original productions of the ancient Galic poet to whom they are aſcribed. Proceeding on this baſis, theſe traditionary ſongs form the connective links in the hiſtory of the northern Britons, between that part which Tacitus has made us ſpecially acquainted with, and that where the Scottiſh annals begin to wear an air of truth and certainty. Mr. Macpherſon, in his learned and ingenious Enquiry into the Antiquities of Great Britain and Ireland, has ſufficiently refuted thoſe improbable tales, which the credulity of Buchannan, Fordun, and Hector Boethius, implicitly adopted from the reveries of the Iriſh monks of the tenth and eleventh centuries, and which likewiſe miſled the otherwiſe accurate and authentic Bede. Theſe formed for the moſt part that fabulous hiſtory of Scotland, previous to the acknowledged exiſtence of Fergus the ſon of Artho, called Fergus the II. which had ſo long been obtruded upon the world. It would have been a moſt valuable completion of Mr. Macpherſon's intereſting reſearches in this walk, had he collected and arranged the various traditions, from the poems of thoſe times, in the form of an hiſtory. His intimate acquaintance with the Galic language, and thorough knowledge of the genius of the nation and of the times, rendered him the moſt adequate to the taſk. It were ſtill to be wiſhed that ſome Caledonian antiquarian would undertake it, and the hiſtory of the celebrated Fingal and his heroes would be a moſt acceptable acquiſition to the Scots, the chimerical antiquity of whoſe national records having been exploded, they would find ſome conſolation in partly filling up the chaſm with theſe more authentic memoirs of their brave progenitors.

FINGAL

FINGAL AND HIS HEROES; OSSIAN*.

THEN reared FINGAL his radiant ſtandard proud,
The glorious ſunbeam † ſtreaming o'er the hills
That riſe dim-miſtful through bleak Morven's ‡ realm;
Fingal

* To ſketch the outline of that connection, which the traditionary poems we are entering upon would make in the dark annals of theſe times, we muſt recur to the intrepid champion of liberty who reſiſted Agricola. In the poems of Oſſian we find two heroes, either of whom may be ſuppoſed to have been the ſame with Galgacus. Colgach, the anceſtor of Gaul, one of Fingal's warriors, appears to have been king or general of the Caledonians, and his poſterity, the tribe of Morni, diſputed on this account the ſovereign power with Fingal. Colgach ſignifies *fiercely looking*, and agrees very well with the epithet of *Cachach* or *præliofus*, which, we have ſeen, Gordon ſuppoſed to be the etymon of Galgacus; but tradition has not handed down any of the actions of this Colgach, while thoſe, which we are acquainted with, of Trenmor, the great-grandfather of Fingal, tally exactly with the Galgacus of Tacitus. Trenmor was the firſt who repreſented to the Caledonian chiefs the folly of attempting to reſiſt the Romans ſeparately and by turns, while diſcord and diviſion reigned amongſt themſelves—*Noſtris illi diſſentionibus ac diſcordiis clari, vitia hoſtium in gloriam exercitus ſui vertunt.* He was the firſt who united their tribes, and commanded them as chief, againſt the incurſions of the Romans, and by his ſuperior valour and conduct he gained ſuch an intereſt among them, that he, and his family after him, were regarded as kings—*Inter plures duces virtute et genere præſtans, nomine Galgacus.* Trenmor, therefore, whoſe name likewiſe, ſignifying *tall and mighty*, might be adduced in corroboration, may with moſt propriety

† ‡ For the notes above referred to by theſe marks † ‡, vide next page.

Fingal and all his heroes, noble theme
Of ſightleſs OSSIAN *, at whoſe name, the Muſe,
With

be taken for Galgacus. Trathal and Comhal, the immediate progenitors of Fingal, were equally commanders in chief of the Caledonians againſt the Romans, but the latter was ſlain in battle againſt the tribe of Morni, who then gaining the aſcendancy, it was not till ſome time afterwards that Fingal ſubdued them, and poſſeſſed, in effect, the honours which he inherited.

† Fingal's ſtandard was diſtinguiſhed by the name of the *ſun-beam*, probably on account of its bright colour and its being ſtudded with gold. To begin a battle is expreſſed, in old Highland compoſitions, by *lifting of the ſun-beam*.

‡ Morvern is the name, even at the preſent day, of that part of Inverneſsſhire fronting the iſle of Sky on the one hand, and Liſmore and Argyleſhire on the other; this, therefore, may be ſuppoſed to have been the patrimonial kingdom of Fingal; but all the north-weſt coaſt of Scotland probably went, of old, under the name of Morven, which ſignifies a ridge of very high hills.

* Oſſian, like the Grecian Homer and our own Milton, was blind with age when he compoſed many of his poems, in which there are frequent alluſions to his loſs of ſight. The following addreſs to the Sun, in his poem Carthon, in which he feelingly deplores this infirmity, has ſo much beauty and expreſſion that we cannot forbear tranſcribing it:—"O thou that "rolleſt above, round as the ſhield of my fathers! Whence are "thy beams, O Sun! thy everlaſting light? Thou comeſt forth "in thy aweful beauty; the ſtars hide themſelves in the ſky; "the moon, cold and pale, ſinks in the weſtern wave. But "thou thyſelf moveſt alone: who can be a companion of thy "courſe! The oaks of the mountains fall; the mountains them-
"ſelves

With fire congenial warmed, awakes to ſing
The northern Homer's fame: ywrapt in gloom
Shall then her kindred Oſſian be forgot?
Shall the primeval poet of this iſle,
Whoſe ſtrong untutored genius firſt arouſed
The ſlumber of the Muſe in frozen climes,
Who, copying nature, made, deſpite the thrall
Of his contracted unenlightened age,
Mere nature's verſe refinement's praiſe command,
Shall he remain uncelebrate? Ariſe,

" ſelves decay with years; the ocean ſhrinks and grows again;
" the moon herſelf is loſt in heaven; but thou art for ever the
" ſame, rejoicing in the brightneſs of thy courſe. When the
" world is dark with tempeſts; when thunder rolls, and light-
" ning flies; thou lookeſt in thy beauty, from the clouds,
" and laugheſt at the ſtorm. But to Oſſian, thou lookeſt in vain;
" for he beholds thy beams no more; whether thy yellow hair
" flows on the eaſtern clouds, or thou trembleſt at the gates of
" the weſt. But thou art, perhaps, like me, for a ſeaſon; thy
" years will have an end. Thou ſhalt ſleep in thy clouds, care-
" leſs of the voice of the morning. Exult then, O Sun!
" in the ſtrength of thy youth! Age is dark and unlovely;
" it is like the glimmering light of the moon, when it ſhines
" through broken clouds, and the miſt is on the hills; the
" blaſt of the north is on the plain; the traveller ſhrinks in the
" midſt of his journey."

Ye ſpirits of the whirlwind and the miſt,
Ye cloud-reſiding genii that impel
The ſtorm's tremendous roar, the lightning's flaſh,
The echoing thunder of the Grampian hills,
And all the aweful beauties of the land
Where Oſſian ſung and fought, ariſe, and ſtrike,
While, whiſtling o'er the heath, ye wake the ſoul
To thoughts ſublime, conviction to the mind,
That, led by idle ſophiſtry, can deem
His verſe impoſture and his being nought.
No; Oſſian's fame ſhall ſtand like Morven's oak,
That lifts its broad head to the incumbent ſtorm,
And fearleſs meets the mid-courſe of the wind *.
What bold enthuſiaſtic numbers ſweep
From off his martial lyre—Liſten! he paints
With faithful glow his country's heroes; oft
Borne with reſiſtleſs metaphor on high,
He ſoars, and, eagle-like, alone deſcends
To graſp his theme, ſome true and noble deed,

* See the laſt lines of his poem, Berrathon, "But my fame "ſhall remain, and grow like the oak of Morven, which lifts its "broad head to the ſtorm, and rejoices in the courſe of the "wind."

With

With which he darts upright, and rides the air
Again ſublime—Liſten! how firſt he ſings
Fingal's renown on Lochlin's * duſky ſhores,

* The exploits of Fingal and his heroes were acted on an extenſive theatre; Scandinavia, Scotland and the adjacent iſles, Ireland, and the Roman province of Britain, were by turns the ſcenes of their achievements. A few of the moſt prominent actions, recorded in the poems of Oſſian, are here celebrated. Mr. Macpherſon's laſt edition of them, in which they are profeſſedly arranged in the order of time, has been followed in this reſpect. The firſt, Cathloda, celebrates an early action of Fingal. That hero, in his youth, making a voyage to the Orkney iſlands, was driven, by ſtreſs of weather, into a bay near the reſidence of Starno, king of Lochlin, which was the ancient general name for all Scandinavia, but here, perhaps, means only the peninſula of Jutland. Fingal had on a former occaſion, when in Lochlin, been treacherouſly attacked by Starno: now, therefore, miſtruſtful of the Scandinavian chief, the king of Morven refuſes to come to his feaſt, and Starno attacks him, at firſt openly, but is defeated; he then, ſtill meditating revenge (for Fingal had once overcome him in a trial of ſtrength, which was the foundation of this hate) after his ſon Swaran had refuſed to undertake the deed, advances alone, under cover of darkneſs, to the hill whither Fingal, according to the cuſtom of the Caledonian kings, had retired by himſelf during the night. He there attempts the aſſaſſination of his enemy, but is diſcovered, vanquiſhed, bound to a tree, and diſmiſſed in the morning with a reprimand for the baſeneſs of his conduct.

Where ſtern, relentleſs Starno, traitor-king,
Who baſely acts th' aſſaſſin, cedes before
Fingal's unerring arm, and captived mourns
Th' attempt ſucceſsleſs—Next, the poet chaunts
The eager fight on ſedgy Carun's bank *,

* The dramatic poem of Comala celebrates a ſignal victory gained by Fingal, on the banks of the Carun (the river Carron, near Falkirk) over the Romans, in which the ſon of the king of the world, Caracul, fled from his arms, along the fields of his pride. This was in the year 211, and about, or after, the time of the Caledonian expedition of the emperor Septimius Severus, whoſe ſon, Caracalla, is the Caracul of Oſſian. Severus, called over to Britain by the intelligence of an invaſion of the province by the barbarians of the North, paſſed the walls of Adrian and Antoninus, and penetrated into the northern extremity of the iſland, with the fixed determination of exterminating the whole nation of the Caledonians; but the flattering hopes of Severus vaniſhed into air, and his mighty powers were baffled by the perſevering reſiſtance of the natives. The concealed ambuſcades of the Caledonians, who hung unſeen on the rear and flanks of his army, the coldneſs of the climate, and the ſeverity of a winter march acroſs the hills and moraſſes of Scotland, coſt the emperor above fifty thouſand men; and after the moſt vigorous, but unavailing exertions of courage, conduct, and force, he was at laſt reduced to the old and inglorious expedient of building a wall to exclude from the province thoſe barbarians, whom he could neither extirpate or ſubdue. Dion. Caſſ. lib. lxxvi.

From

From whoſe diſaſtrous ſtreams, along the fields
Of his own pride, fled Caracul the baſe,
Son of the world's dread king, while on his rear
Fingal victorious preſſed, and baffled all
The powers and hopes Severus brought from Rome.
Then to the north, where Iniſtore * aſcends

In

* Iniſtore, or, more properly, Inis-orc, was the ancient name of the Orcades or Orkney iſlands, and ſignifies the iſland of orcs or whales. *Orca eſt genus marinæ belluæ maximum.* Pompeius Feſtus. Milton uſes the word orc in the ſame ſenſe;

The haunt of ſeals, and orcs, and ſea-mews clang.

It was on Fingal's return from an expedition againſt the Romans, that, going to viſit his friend Cathulla, the king of Iniſtore, he found his fortreſs of Carric-thura inveſted by the forces of Frothal, king of Sora, a country of Scandinavia. Fingal attacked the invaders, and vanquiſhed their king in ſingle combat, but he "ſtayed the uplifted ſword, and brought Frothal "to the feaſt of Iniſtore, while gladneſs brightened in the hall." This is the ſubject of one of Oſſian's poems, entitled Carric-thura, in which he introduces the ſpirit of Loda, the god of Scandinavia, or deified Odin of the North, as aſſiſting the forces of Sora againſt Carric-thura; the ſpirit with all his terrors encounters Fingal during the night which preceded the engagement. The poetic beauty, the magic wildneſs, and horrific ſublimity

In ſpiry rocks, the king directs his courſe;
And there Cathulla needs his mighty aid,

And

of this fiction, may well make amends for its extravagance, eſpecially if we conſider that Oſſian ſays no more than what perfectly agreed with the notions of the times.

" A blaſt came from the mountain, on its wings was the ſpirit " of Loda. He came to his place in terrors, and ſhook his duſky " ſpear. His eyes appear like flames in his dark face; his " voice is like diſtant thunder. Fingal advanced his ſpear " in night, and raiſed his voice on high.

" Son of night, retire: call thy winds and fly! Why doſt " thou come to my preſence with thy ſhadowy arms? Do I " fear thy gloomy form, ſpirit of diſmal Loda? Weak is " thy ſhield of clouds; feeble is that meteor thy ſword! The " blaſt rolls them together; and thou thyſelf art loſt. Fly from " my preſence, ſon of night! call thy winds and fly!

" Doſt thou force me from my place? replied the hollow " voice. The people bend before me. I turn the battle in " the field of the brave. I look on the nations, and they vaniſh: " my noſtrils pour the blaſt of death. I come abroad on the " winds; the tempeſts are before my face. But my dwelling " is calm, above the clouds; the fields of my reſt are plea- " ſant.

" Dwell then in thy pleaſant fields, ſaid the king; let Com- " hal's ſon be forgot. Do my ſteps aſcend, from my hills, into " thy peaceful plains? Do I meet thee, with a ſpear, on thy " cloud, ſpirit of diſmal Loda? Why then doſt thou frown on " me? Why ſhake thine airy ſpear? Thou frowneſt in vain: I

 " never

And Carric-thura dreads her girding foes,
Whom Sora's chief to battle leads along;
Fierce Loda's ſpirit aids their threatening arms,
And ſtoops in tenfold horror o'er her towers.
But Sora's chief and diſmal Loda's form,
Alike unvalued, fright not Morven's king,
Who ſpares the vanquiſhed Frothal's forfeit head,
While gladneſs brightens in Cathulla's hall.
Now to green Erin's ſhores the Muſe conveys

" never fled from the mighty in war: and ſhall the ſons of the
" wind frighten the king of Morven? No: he knows the weak-
" neſs of their arms.

" Fly to thy land, replied the form: receive the wind, and fly!
" The blaſts are in the hollow of my hand: the courſe of the
" ſtorm is mine. The king of Sora is my ſon, he bends at the
" ſtone of my power. His battle is around Carric-thura; and
" he will prevail! Fly to thy land, ſon of Comhal, or feel my
" flaming wrath!

" He lifted high his ſhadowy ſpear. He bent forward his
" dreadful height. Fingal, advancing, drew his ſword. The
" gleaming path of the ſteel winds through the gloomy ghoſt.
" The form fell ſhapeleſs into air, like a column of ſmoke,
" which the ſtaff of the boy diſturbs, as it riſes from the half-
" extinguiſhed furnace. The ſpirit of Loda ſhrieked, as rol-
" led into himſelf, he roſe on the wind. Iniſtore ſhook at the
" ſound. The waves heard it on the deep. They ſtopped in
" their courſe with fear."

The

The warrior-bard *: there dauntleſs Semo's ſon,
Car-borne Cuthullin, rules the mighty war
Againſt proud Lochlin's race, whoſe arms prevail,
'Till, like a meteor, Morven's king appears,
And from the bold invaders wreſts the palm.
Here, on the verdant plains of Ullin, ſee
Grandſire and grandſon, brothers, heroes, friends,
Fingal and Oſcar, Oſſian, Ryno, Fillan,
And Morni's ſon, the braveſt of the brave,
Drawing their kindred ſwords; Cuthullin owns

* The ſubject of the epic poem, that goes by the name of Fingal, is the following:—Cuthullin, the ſon of Semo, was general of the Iriſh tribes during the minority of Cormac, king of Ullin or Ulſter in Ireland. Swaran, king of Lochlin, invades that country, and defeats Cuthullin, but Fingal arriving turns the tide of war, and after ſeveral battles takes Swaran priſoner, whom he generouſly releaſes upon an engagement to deſiſt from further attempts upon Ireland, called of old Erin or the Weſtern Iſland. In this war we diſtinguiſh the actions of a crowd of kindred heroes; Fingal and his ſons, Oſſian, Ryno, and Fillan; his grandſon Oſcar, the favourite child of Oſſian, and the favourite theme of many of his poems; and Gaul the ſon of Morni, who, from an hereditary enemy, was become one of the moſt faithful and moſt eſteemed of the friends of Fingal. Ryno, the youngeſt ſon of Fingal, is ſlain in the laſt engagement.

The

The forceful aid, and Swaran, back repelled,
Bounds homeward on the darkly-rolling wave.
As through the fractured Caledonian rocks
The Hyperborean ocean, foaming, roars,
So, through the thouſand iſles that crowd the coaſts
Of northern lands, Fingal's renown reſounds.
Once more recalled to Erin's fertile ſoil,
Where on the murdered Cormac's ſtately throne *

The

* We now come to the poem of Temora, which celebrates the reconqueſt of Ullin or Ulſter, by Fingal, from Cairbar, who, being the moſt potent chief of the Fir-bolg, or ſouthern inhabitants of Ireland, had overcome and killed Cuthullin, and murdered Cormac, the young king of Ulſter, at Temora. Cormac was lineally deſcended from Conar, the ſon of Trenmor, the great-grandfather of Fingal, who made this expedition into Ireland for the purpoſe of diſpoſſeſſing the uſurper Cairbar, and reſtoring the race of Conar to the throne. The only remaining branch of this family, Ferad-artho, had been ſaved from the murderous ſword of Cairbar, and concealed in a cave during his uſurpation. This was the laſt of the wars of Fingal, who muſt have been far advanced in years when he undertook it. Oſcar falls by the ſword of Cairbar, who had invited him to his hall, and, ſeeking a quarrel with the youth, fights and kills him, but is himſelf mortally wounded in the fray. The command of the Fir-bolg then devolves upon Cathmor, the brother of Cairbar, but of the moſt oppoſite character,

being

The dark-ſouled Cairbar rules in Temora,
Fingal again ſpeeds through the foaming ſurge,
And leads, impetuous, Morven's youth to war,
To reinſtate the laſt of Conar's race
In Ireland's regal ſeat. Nor comes the king
In vain; though in the vale of years advanced,
Yet greateſt, foremoſt in the ranks of death,

being of the moſt noble, generous, and hoſpitable diſpoſition; he is, however, in perſon, worſted by Fingal, and dies on the field of battle, and the poem concludes with the reſtoration of Ferad-artho to the throne of his fathers. In this war Fingal loſes his ſon Fillan, and Oſſian, with another ſon, Fergus, were the only remaining children of the great king of Morven. This Fergus was, according to ſome traditions, the anceſtor of Fergus, the ſon of Ertho or Arcath, commonly called Fergus the Second in the Scottiſh hiſtories. The beginning of the reign of Fergus over the Scots is placed, by the moſt approved annals, in the fourth year of the fifth age; a full century after the death of Oſſian. The genealogy of his family is thus recorded by the highland ſenachies: *Fergus Mac-Arcath, Mac-Chongael, Mac-Fergus, Mac-Fiongael na buai*, i. e. Fergus the ſon of Arcath, the ſon of Congal, the ſon of Fergus, the ſon of Fingal the victorious. If we trace the genealogy of Fergus according to the fabulous hiſtory, which has been given as that of Scotland before his time, we find him the fourth in deſcent from one Fincormacus, who therefore anſwers to our Fingal, and is ſaid to have been a great and valiant prince.

Shines

Shines Comhal's ſon. But noble Oſcar falls,
In prime of youth, in gloomy Cairbar's hall,
And ill-ſtarred Fillan bleeds upon the field
Amid the ſtrife of heroes, manful pierced.
They fall not unrevenged; dark Cairbar's ſoul
Seeks the blue miſt that from drear Lego's lake *
Chill ſhrouds the ghoſts of heroes, ere the ſong
Funereal gives them to their airy halls;
And generous Cathmor too reſigns his breath,
And leaves Fingal, victorious chief confeſt,
To place the crown on Ferad-artho's head.
From Lochlin to green Inisfail † the fame
Of great Fingal and of his warrior arm,
Diffuſed reſplendent, ſhines with luſtre forth

* As the miſt, which roſe from the lake of Lego, occaſioned diſeaſes and death, the bards feigned that it was the reſidence of the ghoſts of the deceaſed, during the interval between their death and the pronouncing the funeral elegy over them; for it was not allowable, without that ceremony was performed, for the ſpirits of the dead to mix with their anceſtors in their airy halls.

† Inisfail, one of the ancient names of Ireland, ſo called from a colony that ſettled there called Falans. Inisfail, the iſland of the Fail or Falans.

Beyond

Beyond coeval names; ſo Heſper glows,
The brighteſt gem of all the ſtarry orbs
That twinkle through the haze of ſhadowy night.

COMPARISON BETWEEN THE ROMANS AND CALEDONIANS.

Now pauſe, my Muſe, and following Gibbon's page,
Gibbon the eloquent, who faithful paints
Great Rome's decline, with imitative ſtrain,
Retrace the contraſt which he juſtly draws
Between the nations ſtriving on the verge
Of Romulus' vaſt empire, one for ſway,
For independence, and for Nature's rights,
The other, Romans and Caledonians;
How little here Rome's emperor appears
Compared to great and generous Fingal;
The timid brutal cruelty and vice
Of Caracul, to Oſſian's tenderneſs,
His martial bravery and poetic worth;
The mercenary motives of the baſe,

The

The ſlaved chiefs, whom fear or intereſt ſwayed
To join th' imperial ſtandard, to the bold
Energic courage of the freeborn men,
The hardy northern warriors, ſtarting forth
To arms and vengeance at the powerful voice
Of Fingal king of Morven; and the rough
Untainted Caledonians, heroes all,
Glowing with Nature's virtues warm and ſtrong,
To the degenerate Romans, ſtained, diſgraced
With the mean vices which from ſlavery ſpring,
Contaminating th' excellence of Man *.

FIRST REMOTE CAUSE OF THE NAVAL EMINENCE OF BRITAIN †.

But now, eager to hail the riſing dawn
Of Britain's naval glory, firſt the Muſe

* See the prototype of this parallel, book i. chap. vi. of Gibbon's Hiſtory of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire.

† In the dearth of events more cloſely connected with Britain, we here recur to one, which, however remotely, yet as eſſentially relating to her naval eminence, cannot fail of being intereſting.

Expanſive

Expanſive ſings, and figures to herſelf
Britannia's genius preſs with fluttering breaſt
The utmoſt rock that ſtems th' Atlantic main,
The patrimony of a future race,
Her genuine ſons; there with an ardent eye,
Prophetic, deep expecting, ſee ſhe ſits,
And where th' horizon bounds her piercing view
Still paints a whitening ſail, and, ſtill deceived,
She mourns the long delay; for this great cauſe,
This firſt foundation of our naval fame,
That future ages ſhall, improving, raiſe
To the arch-empire of all other power,
The ſole command of Ocean's green domain,
So fills her godlike ſoul, ſo fires her mind,
That expectation and deſire o'ercome
Her faculties celeſtial, and awhile
Give to the blue-eyed goddeſs power to err,
And e'en her own pre-knowledge to miſtruſt;
For well ſhe knew this time by Fate was ſet
To witneſs to the boldeſt enterprize
That yet had been adventured, ſince the time
The Argonauts firſt clove the yielding brine,

And

And up the ruſhing Boſphorus impelled
Their nutſhell boats, and o'er the darkſome ſea
Explored their doubtful way to Colchis' ſhore.

EXPEDITION OF THE FRANKS FROM THE EUXINE TO THE GERMAN OCEAN *.

E'EN from that very Euxine now behold
A fiercer race of Argonauts ariſe,
Unheeded,

* See the ſtory of the daring and ſucceſsful enterprize of the Franks, in the twelfth chapter of the firſt book of Gibbon's Hiſtory of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire, whence the firſt ſuggeſtion was taken of its relative connection with the maritime hiſtory of our country. Ever ſince the event here recorded, which happened under the reign of the emperor Probus, we learn, that the Franks had conſtructed ſquadrons of light brigantines, in which they inceſſantly ravaged the Roman provinces adjacent to the ocean. To repel their deſultory excurſions, it was found neceſſary to create a naval power. Geſſoriacum, or Boulogne, in the ſtreights of the Britiſh channel, was choſen for the ſtation of the Roman fleet. This was afterwards converted into a Britiſh navy by Caraufius, as we ſhall hereafter have occaſion to notice, and the Britiſh emperor courted

Unheeded, unexpected, unrepelled.
The tyrant policy that ſent the Franks,
Whom war's fair chance or treaſon's wily power
Had given in Gaul to bow beneath the yoke
Of Rome, to people diſtant wilds, along
The drear Cimmerian and Meotian ſeas,
Ne'er dreamt that liberty innate could raiſe
The tempeſt that o'erwhelmed the peaceful ſhores
Of the vaſt empire, ſtretched on either ſide
From Seſtos and Abydos to the mounts
Of Hercules; the Franks, indignant thus
To wander outcaſts from their native ſoil,
Seize in a proſperous hour a Roman fleet,
And, unexperienced in the arduous taſk
Of braving watery deaths, boldly deſcend
The Helleſpont, and ſteer their mazy way

courted the friendſhip, and obtained the aſſiſtance of the Franks. The braveſt of their youth and their moſt experienced mariners were enliſted in his ſervice, and Britain was thus firſt eſtabliſhed and acknowledged as a maritime power, by a conſequence eaſily deducible from this arduous voyage of upwards of five thouſand miles, performed by a band of unexperienced adventurers, from the coaſts of the Black Sea to thoſe of the German Ocean.

Through

Through the Ægean ſea, till doubling full
Cythera's iſle, and the bold cape erſt called
Tenarum, but now Matapan, the moſt
Verging to ſouthward of our Europe's bounds,
On Afric's fenceleſs ſhores they pour amain *,
And gorge their long-repreſſed, their ardent luſt
For plunder and revenge, amongſt the ſwarths
By Rome ſubdued; thence darting full athwart
The middle ſea, to where Sicilia's coaſts
In beauteous ſymmetry ſhew plenty's hoards
Expoſed in ranges from the ſandy beach
To the mid-regions of its dark-veiled heights,
There ſoon deface with a barbaric hand
Nature's beſt garb, and Syracuſe the proud,
Whom Athens, Carthage, Rome, conflicting owned

* Count Zoſimus, in his relation of this occurrence, mentions the deſcent of the Franks on Sicily, and the ſack of Syracuſe, as the firſt outrage committed by the barbarians, who, he ſays, afterwards ravaged the coaſts of Africa; but Gibbon has reverſed theſe circumſtances, and as he conſulted other writers, and the geographical progreſſion ſeems more natural, his relation has been adopted. The difference is, at all events, very immaterial.

Well worth a noble ſword, ignobly now muſt fall
Beneath their murdering glaive, which ſpares nor age
Nor ſex, but in one ruin wraps the whole,
So dreadful, that the frighted 'habitants
Of Etna's baſe, trembling, uncertain, ſtand,
And heſitate whether to meet their fate
From this deſtructive foe, or ruſh at once,
Upwards, to where, flammivomous and fierce,
The dreadful crater ſends a ſcorching death
For many a downward mile; for fire purſues
Their ſteps below, ſince with relentleſs hands,
When at the even fall they quit the ſhore,
The Franks their quick-alluming firebrands raiſe,
And ſmoothly gliding from th' ineended coaſt,
Admire th' horrific imagery that now
By night preſent their own untoward deeds;
For, far-illumed, the ſea reflects the flame
From Syracuſe and fair Catania's walls,
Bordering the ſable-veſted face of night,
While high above, a world of livid fire,
And forky lightnings crown the awful ſcene,

Shewing

Shewing like Jove, enclouded on the top
Of dread Olympus, in an angry hour,
Blaſting offending cities 'neath his ſeat,
Or, as the ſacred law-giver relates,
The King of Kings, tremendous in his wrath,
From forth his burning, everlaſting, throne,
O'erwhelming ſinful Sodom with his fires.
Thence through the Balearic ſea they ſpeed,
And paſſing Calpe's mount, now ſtem the tide
Which northern guſts have ſent to greet theſe ſons
Of freedom, from their Scandinavian ſhores.
Now Luſitania feels their dreaded ſcourge,
And Gaul's affrighted coaſts recede, diſmayed
By havoc and by blood; while as they turn
The cape that moſt from Brittany's fair ſhores
Points to th' Atlantic world, Britannia ſees
With heart felt joy, the hardy race advance:
" All hail, ye noble venturers, from you
" My ſons will firſt their naval ſpirit catch,
" And by the bright example urged, extend
" Their fame to diſtant climes, and ages hence,
" When long approving time my claim allows,

" Will to the Arctic and Antarctic poles
" Convey my triumphs, and expand my reign".
Now ſteering their triumphant courſe along
The narrowing channel, and the chalky ſtreights
Of Dover, the adventurous Franks deſcend
On Friſian ſhores, and there in ardent folds
Are welcomed by their long-loſt friends, their wives,
Their children left in helpleſs infancy,
Now a new warrior race, panting to try
Their generous vigour on the common foe,
The tyrant Romans, who enſlaved their ſires.
Soon with united hands and glowing hearts,
Taught by this grand example of ſucceſs
To know th' advantage and deſpiſe the riſk
Of winds and waves, joining the inborn thirſt
Of wealth and glory to the powerful ſpur
Of vengeance, they with noble ardour build
Squadrons of ſwift and tempeſt-braving ſkiffs,
And ſhine in hiſtory Rome's unquelled ſcourge.

CARAUSIUS*.

AGAIN to Britain's iſle we joyful turn
Our thoughts too devious; haply there behold
The

* Before mentioning the Caledonian expedition of Severus, we ought to have noticed the aſſumption of the imperial dignity in Britain by Clodius Albinus, immediately upon the murder of the emperor Pertinax. He was, however, ſoon defeated and ſlain by his ſucceſsful competitor, Severus. From the death of this emperor to the reign of Diocleſian, very little concerning the affairs of Britain has come to our knowledge. From the coins that have been found here of Poſtumus, Lollianus, Victorinus, Marius, and Tetricus, it appears that ſeveral of the nineteen pretenders to the empire, who have generally been called the thirty tyrants, in the time of the indolent Gallienus, were preſent, or acknowledged in Britain; and Camden conjectures that Cl. Com. Lælianus, whoſe coins are found only in this iſland, was the Britiſh tyrant or uſurper, whom Zoſimus mentions, in the time of Probus. The reſources, both in men and money, of the province of Britain, we ſee, therefore, frequently enabled its Roman governors to be candidates for the ſovereignty of the world; but the memoirs of none of them are intereſting to Britons, except thoſe of Carauſius, who, although a Roman general, and afterwards joint emperor with Diocleſian and Maximian, has juſtly been regarded as a Britiſh worthy. The expedition of the Franks, juſt related, is immediately introductory to his hiſtory. Ever ſince the return from the Euxine of theſe raſh but ſucceſsful adventurers, their daring

The future brilliancy of England's fame,
As in a magic glaſs, prophetic riſe.

In

countrymen, we have ſeen, had inceſſantly ravaged the provinces of the Roman empire which bordered upon the ocean, and that to repel the incurſions it was found neceſſary to eſtabliſh a naval power. The command of the Roman fleet, which was ſtationed at Boulogne, was entruſted to Caraufius, who had long ſignalized his ſkill as a pilot, and his valour as a ſoldier, and from an obſcure and dubious origin, had ariſen by conſpicuous merit to this poſt of truſt and importance. His military conduct in quelling the dangerous inſurrection of the Bagaudæ, in Gaul, and in repelling, both by ſea and by land, the attacks of the Burgundians, Allemans, and other German nations, had gained him the reputation of a conſummate general and an experienced ſeaman; his renown greatly eclipſed that of the emperor Maximian, who commanded in the weſt (while Diocleſian more immediately directed the affairs of the eaſt) and raiſed that inveterate jealouſy and envy which unceaſingly rankled in the heart of that gloomy tyrant. To excuſe the baſe attempts made upon the life of his admiral, the hiſtoriographers of the Roman emperor have alleged, that Caraufius connived at the paſſage of the northern freebooters, and diligently intercepting them on their return, appropriated to his own uſe an ample ſhare of the ſpoil they had acquired. There is little probability in the aſſertion, as it ſuppoſes an imbecility and tameneſs on the part of the Franks, little conſiſtent with their character. But, whether it be to adminiſter juſtice, or to gratify revenge, no motive

can

In yonder cloudy times, when, all within
The gloomy night of Roman conqueſt hid,
No ſtars propitious ſhine but thoſe of Rome,
On Britain's ſhores, a luminary ſee,
Piercing, with brighteſt rays, ſubjection's veil.
CARAUSIUS, the brave Menapian * chief,

By

can palliate aſſaſſination, which was the mode adopted by Maximian to rid himſelf of his aſpiring rival. But, aware of his danger, and of the baſeneſs of his antagoniſt, Caraufius foreſaw and prevented the blow. By his liberality and affability he had attached to his fortunes the fleet which he commanded. From the port of Boulogne he ſailed over to Britain, perſuaded the legion and the auxiliaries which guarded that iſland to embrace his party, and boldly aſſuming, with the imperial purple, the title of Auguſtus, defied both the ſecret machinations, and the open violence of his enraged enemy.

* Much doubt has been entertained concerning the birth-place of Caraufius; he is by all allowed to have been a native of Menapia; but whether the Menapii of Julius Cæſar, a nation of Belgium, occupying the country now called Brabant, the Menapia of Ptolemy, at preſent Wexford, in Ireland, or the city of St. David's, in Wales, which Richard of Cirenceſter, in his *Britannia Romana*, ſays, was anciently called Menapia, may claim this honour, is indeterminate. The expreſſion of Aurelius Victor, *Bataviæ alumnus*, would induce us to give the preference to the firſt, were not Dr. Stukely, whoſe medallic hiſtory of Caraufius evinces the moſt laborious inveſtigation and critical

reſearch

By manly merit and inherent worth,
From what dull hood-winked prejudice would ſtyle
A vile obſcurity, advanced on high,
Imperial Cæſar of Britannia's iſle,
An independent empire here aſſerts *.
Firſt, faithful to a faithleſs tyrant, he

research of every thing relative to him, decidedly in favour of the laſt. Carauſius, he thinks, was born at St. David's, in Wales, and he adds, from what authority however we know not, that he was a prince of the blood-royal of Britain. Eutropius, however, calls him, *viliſſime natus*, which is conſonant to what moſt others have written. But, as nobility of birth heightens the diſgrace and infamy of ſuch as are the degenerate deſcendants of heroic and worthy anceſtors, ſo, on the other hand, the obſcurity or meanneſs of the origin of a truly great man enhances and exalts his merits, in the eyes of every unprejudiced philoſopher.

* When Britain was diſmembered from the empire by Carauſius, its importance was ſenſibly felt, and its loſs ſincerely lamented. The Romans celebrated, and, perhaps, magnified the extent of that noble iſland, provided on every ſide with convenient harbours; the temperature of the climate, and the fertility of the ſoil, alike adapted for the production of corn or of vines; the valuable minerals with which it abounded; its rich paſtures, covered with innumerable flocks, and its woods, free from wild beaſts or venomous ſerpents. Above all, they regretted the large amount of the revenue of Britain, whilſt they confeſſed, that ſuch a province well deſerved to become the ſeat of an independent monarchy. Panegyr. Vet. v. ii. vii. 9.

With

With valour, wiſdom, baſe Maximian ſerves,
'Till envy, knawing at the emperor's heart,
Employs th' aſſaſſin's knife to take that life,
He durſt not challenge in the open field.
But, happy in the love of all around,
Carauſius fears no ill, and thus compelled
By nature's firſt immutable command,
In ſelf-defence, his banner raiſes high,
Inimical, and Geſſoriacum ſwarms
With warrior-followers of the noble chief;
Britons, Batavians, Romans, Friſians, Franks,
All with united hands advance on high
Their ponderous ſhields, and on that martial throne
Salute Carauſius, " Io, Cæſar, Io !"
And when to Britain's coaſt his navy turns,
Redoubled Peans ſound along the beach,
For liberty comes hand in hand with joy,
Long baniſhed inmates, long regretted too,
To grace the train of Britain's emperor *.

The

* There are many coins of Carauſius extant, which were ſtruck upon this occaſion, inſcribed *Expectate veni*, and *Adventus Aug.* The joy of the Britons knew no bounds at the ſight,

The azure ſea-nymphs from their coral beds
Ariſe, and hail this glorious morn of fame:
" Thrice worthy of the purple robe, all hail!
" Carauſius, welcome to th' imperial throne
" Of Britain and of Ocean, firſt achieved,
" Firſt by thy matchleſs genius here conjoin'd,
" As nature meant them, in one ſovereign rule.
" Now to our favourite Albion belongs
" The noble birth-right ſhe was formed to claim,
" The maſter-power that wealth and honour brings,
" Unbounded ſource of glory, Britain's pride,
" The wide extended empire of the ſea *."

The

ſight of their deliverer, their countryman, whoſe virtues they admired, and whoſe fame was loudly proclaimed over all the weſtern part of the empire; and it was not a little heightened by the contraſt between their preſent proſpects, and their new emperor with the tyrannical adminiſtration of Baſſianus, their governor, under Probus and Carinus, and the reverſe character, and odious nature of the cruel, perfidious, and haughty Maximian. Vide Stukeley's Medallic Hiſtory, page 92.

* During the time Britain was held by Carauſius, it ſtood alone againſt the reſt of the Roman empire, then in the zenith of its proſperity, and governed by two of the moſt potent and moſt celebrated emperors. The whole force of the continent was inadequate to ſubdue this rebel and uſurper, as the Roman

The martial proweſs of yon noble Franks,
Whoſe nautic daring gave them nautic power,

And

writers affect to ſtyle our hero. He defended the frontiers of his dominions againſt the Caledonians of the north, and is ſuppoſed to be the ſame with Caros, king of ſhips, mentioned in the poems of Oſſian, in the battles of Oſcar. Britain at that time abounded with ingenious artiſts, as appears by a paſſage of the panegyriſt to Maximian, who ſays, *civitas Heduorum, ex hac Britannicæ facultate victoriæ, plurimos, quibus illæ provinciæ redundabant, accepit artifices*; and Carauſius encouraged and rewarded the exertions of genius. He erected cities, among which Granta has ariſen, under the Saxon appellation of Cambridge, to a moſt eminent rank in the geography of literature. He repaired the Roman military roads, and founded others of the ſame nature,

——— for ages laid,
Deep, maſſy, firm, diverging every way.

He drew canals for inland navigation, and the Carſdike, as it is at preſent called, is the remains of his moſt famous work, a cut of ſixty feet in breadth, running from Cambridge to the river Trent. His taſte and opulence are diſplayed on the many coins that are preſerved in the cabinets of our antiquarians; and being, in fact, the firſt king of England, he has likewiſe a ſtill ſtronger claim to our attention, as being the firſt who duly appreciated, and properly applied, the latent advantages of Britain, ariſing from the ſurrounding element to which ſhe owes her preſent ſuper-eminent proſperity. His fleets rode triumphant in the channel, commanded the mouths of the Seine and of the Rhine, ravaged the coaſts of the ocean, and

diffuſed,

And well-prized glory, fearful as the blaſt
Tempeſtuous iſſuing from the utmoſt north,
Awhile in looſe, disjointed warfare ſpent,
Now to his aid Carauſius gladly calls,
And in his ſervice liſts their ready youth.
Strong in his naval ſtrength he firmly holds
The trident, and the reins of Neptune's car.
Commander of the ſea, he equal rules
The coaſts afront his iſle; Armorica,
Batavia, Friſia, own his glorious ſway,
And Punic, Grecian coins atteſt the fame
Well earned by Britiſh arms on diſtant coaſts *.

The

diffuſed, beyond the columns of Hercules, the terror of his name. Under his command, B itain, deſtined in a future age to obtain the empire of the ſea, already aſſumed its natural and reſpectable ſtation of a maritime power.

* The Franks, from the opponents of Carauſius, when in the ſervice of Rome, became ſucceſſively his friends, his allies, and his ſubjects. He courted the friendſhip of that formidable people by the flattering imitation of their dreſs and manners, and he enliſted the braveſt of their youth among his land or ſea forces. He had the controul, either as ſovereign, or protector, of the ſea coaſts oppoſite to Britain, from the mouth of the Elbe to Cape Finiſterre; and his naval power is peculiarly and frequently expreſſed on his coins. The repreſentations of

galleys,

The Roman Hercules *, Maximian, yields,
Reluctant, to the hero's ſtronger arm,
And owns him partner of th' imperial throne,

galleys, and of the figure of Neptune, occur on many, but there is one of theſe that deſerves particular notice. The reverſe repreſents the emperor joining hands with Neptune, who, on the prow of a galley, with the trident in his hand, and, what is remarkable, a helmet on his head, ſeems ready for action. This was ſtruck at Rutupium, which ſtood where Sandwich now is, and had, in thoſe times, a capacious harbour, being the mouth of Canterbury river; it was the chief ſtation of the fleet of Caraufius, and many of his medals appear to have been ſtruck there. Dr. Stukely thinks that the one we have here noticed was coined on the completion of the Carſdike navigation, but it ſhould rather ſeem to denote his departure for, or return from ſome of his diſtant naval expeditions, which were many and glorious. In the latter part of his reign he ſailed with a powerful fleet into the Mediterranean, and aſſiſted the *Quinquegentiani*, a nation of Africa, againſt Diocleſian and Maximian. He ſtruck Greek and Punic coins, which are ſtill extant in foreign collections, on the ſhores which he viſited, and left them as memorials of the extent to which his arms could reach, and of the wealth and power which his genius commanded.

* From a motive either of pride or ſuperſtition, the two emperors, Diocleſian and Maximian, aſſumed the titles, the one of Jovius, the other of Herculius. Whilſt the motion of the world (ſuch was the language of their venal orators) was maintained by the all-ſeeing wiſdom of Jupiter, the invincible arm of Hercules purged the earth from monſters and tyrants.

Auguſtus,

Auguſtus, Cæſar, Diocleſian's ſon,
Trijugate ſovereign of the ſubject world *. 780
Triumphant

* The fleet of Maximian was entirely defeated by Carauſius upon his firſt attempt. This naval battle, the firſt we hear of in theſe ſeas, was fought in the ſouthern channel, near the Iſle of Wight, where Dr. Stukely conjectures that Cariſburg, or Cariſbrook Caſtle, was founded by Carauſius in honour of his victory. This diſappointed effort was ſoon productive of a treaty of peace. Diocleſian and his colleague, who juſtly dreaded the enterpriſing ſpirit of Carauſius, reſigned to him the ſovereignty of Britain, with Bononia, or Boulogne, and the ſea-coaſts of the continent which he was poſſeſſed of; and they reluctantly admitted him to a participation of the imperial honours. He became, according to the cuſtom of the times, the adopted ſon of the two emperors, and took the names of Valerius from Diocleſian, and Aurelius from Maximian. There is a remarkable coin, expreſſive of this union; the obverſe repreſents the heads of the three emperors trijugate, Diocleſian in the middle, Carauſius on the right, and Maximian uppermoſt, with this noble legend, *Carauſius et fratres ſui*, and on the reverſe, *Pax Auggg*. But this league was no longer obſerved on the part of the continental emperors than they found it convenient, and ſhortly after we find Carauſius in open warfare with his imperial brethren. He withſtood, however, their efforts, and conſtituting a ſenate here, declared his ſon Sylvius, Cæſar, and thus wholly ſecluded himſelf from his perfidious copartners. We have ſeveral bijugate coins of the emperor and his ſon, and one with the buſt of his empreſs, Oriuna. In the courſe

of

Triumphant rode his fleet along the main;
From Jutland's cliffs to Afric's burning ſands,

And

of the wars which ſucceeded, between Caraufius and his inveterate enemies on the continent, Bononia was reduced by Conſtantius Chlorus, after an obſtinate defence, and Caraufius, in the midſt of his preparations to attempt the re-capture of that important port, was treacherouſly aſſaſſinated, in the ſeventh year of his reign, at York, by Alectus, the captain of his guards. The murderer ſucceeded to his power and to his danger; but he poſſeſſed not equal abilities to exerciſe the one, or to repel the other; and although, by the excellent poſture in which Caraufius had left the country, Alectus was enabled to maintain his ill-gotten dignity three years longer, Britain was again reduced, after the ſhort ſunſhine of glory and proſperity which ſhe had enjoyed under Caraufius, to the humiliating ſituation of a Roman province. The Scotch hiſtorians, who have monopolized all our ancient eminent characters, Caractacus, Boadicea, and others, while they have carefully called queen Cartiſmandua a Briton, have likewiſe made Caraufius, under the name of Carantius, their countryman, the brother of one of their kings, and after making him defeat the Romans, with their aſſiſtance, they have allowed him to enjoy the crown of Britain under the protection of the king of Scots. We cannot conclude this account of Caraufius better than with the following lines, to be found under the buſt of the Britiſh emperor, which is the frontiſpiece to the laborious medallic work of Genebrier,

De l' Hercule Romain je domptai la fierté!
Je rendis aux Bretons leur chere liberté!

And awed the remnant world, as Britain now *.
Long may ſhe reign unrivall'd o'er the waves;

Je fis par ma valeur trembler la terre et l'onde.
Si le traitre Alectus, envieux de mon ſort,
Pour prix de mes bienfaits, n'eut avancé ma mort,
J'aurois pu parvenir à l'empire du monde.

* Conſtantius Chlorus who had the glory of again bringing Britain under the Roman yoke, ſucceeded Maximian in the government of the weſtern empire, and married Helena, the daughter of Coel, prince or king of Colcheſter, by whom he had Conſtantine the Great. This prince carried with him to the continent the flower of the Britiſh youth, and overcoming Maxentius, became ſole ſovereign of the Roman world. During the decay of the power of that unwieldy coloſſus, which followed the removal of the ſeat of empire to Conſtantinople, Britain was greatly infeſted by the Scots, the Picts, the Franks, the Saxons, and other northern nations, and though Theodoſius, Maximus, and Victorinus, at various times repelled them beyond the ancient boundaries of the empire, the more preſſing diſtreſs of Italy and of the capital compelled the Romans at length to withdraw all their forces from the iſland; and in the year 426 or 427, they took their laſt farewell of Britain, while the emperor Valentinian III. publicly and freely releaſed the iſland from the juriſdiction of Rome. Here, therefore, we conclude THE FIRST AGE of the hiſtory of our country, which, although it has been treated perhaps too ſuperficially by hiſtorians, is productive of characters and incidents, highly worthy of record, and well adapted to excite the nobleſt pride of anceſtry in the heart of a Briton.

Long may her ſons undauntedly aſſert
Th' irremeable claim, and quell th' aſſaults
Invaſive of a hydra foe, as erſt,
Ambitious Bourbon's whole monarchal ſtrength.

FINIS.